



BIBLICAL HEROES
AND CLASSICAL CULTURE IN
CHRISTIAN LATE ANTIQUITY

*THE HISTORIOGRAPHY, EXEMPLARITY, AND
ANTI-JUDAISM OF PSEUDO-HEGESIPPUS*

CARSON BAY

Biblical Heroes and Classical Culture in Christian Late Antiquity

In this volume, Carson Bay focuses on an important but neglected work of Late Antiquity: Pseudo-Hegesippus' *On the Destruction of Jerusalem* (*De Excidio Hierosolymitano*), a Latin history of later Second Temple Judaism written during the fourth century CE. Bay explores the presence of the many Old Testament figures in a work that recounts the Roman–Jewish War (66–73 CE) and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. By applying the lens of Roman exemplarity to Pseudo-Hegesippus, he elucidates new facets of biblical reception, history-writing, and anti-Judaism in a text from the formative first century of Christian Empire. The author also offers new insights into the Christian historiographical imagination and how biblical heroes and classical culture helped Christians to write anti-Jewish history. Revealing novel aspects of the influence of the classical literary tradition on early Christian texts, this book also newly questions the age-old distinction between the Christian and the classical (or ‘pagan’) in the ancient Mediterranean world.

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To my wife, Lindsay Rachel Bay:

Gentle, patient,

Quiet, kind,

Girl of my dreams,

Love of my life,

Partner in crime.

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Portions of this book are related to essays that have appeared elsewhere, and I thank reviewers, known and unknown, who helped with the polishing of these pieces as well. [Chapters 3, 8, and 9](#) all contain material discussed in a different context in “Exemplarity, Exegesis, & Ethnography: Abraham in Pseudo-Hegesippus as a Test Case for Biblical Reception in Christian Late Antiquity,” *JBR* 8, no. 1 (2021): 35–59. A different version of [Chapter 5](#) has appeared as “Jewish National Decline and Biblical Figures as Classical Exempla in Pseudo-Hegesippus: Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, and Elisha at *De Excidio* 5.2.1,” *JBR* 7, no. 2 (2020): 167–204; I thank *JBR* and de Gruyter, particularly Albrecht Doehnert, for permission to reproduce portions of that article. Finally, a completely different iteration of [Chapter 6](#), which nevertheless treats much of the same material, is “A New King David for Late Antiquity: Classical Exemplarity & Biblical Personality in Pseudo-Hegesippus,” *Journal of Early Christian History* 11.2 (2021): 1–49.

Some of the material dealt with in this volume was presented at the Models of Piety in Late Antiquity Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA, in November 2019; my thanks to participants and particularly to Andrew Jacobs for that opportunity to think collaboratively about my work. In addition, many of the ideas treated herein have appeared at the annual conferences of the North American Patristics Society and the Society of Biblical Literature, and in various workshops and seminars. I have discussed other facets of this project with various colleagues at diverse times. In each case I owe thanks to these invisible interlocutors. I am also grateful to the students in the Latin Josephus course that I taught with René Bloch at the University of Bern in Spring 2021 – I learned a great deal in that class.

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Abbreviations

<i>Abr.</i>	<i>De Abrahamo</i> (<i>On Abraham</i>) – Philo or Ambrose
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i> (<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>) – Josephus
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
<i>Cain</i>	<i>De Cain et Abel</i> (<i>On Cain and Abel</i>) – Ambrose
<i>Comm.</i>	<i>Commentarius</i> (<i>Commentary</i>) ... – various authors
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Hoelder/Pichler/Tempsky)
<i>De Excidio</i>	<i>De Excidio Hierosolymitano</i> (<i>On the Destruction of Jerusalem</i>) – Ps-Hegesippus
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistula</i> (<i>Letter</i>) – Various authors
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>Hist. Eccl.</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> (<i>Church History</i>) – Eusebius <i>et alia</i>
<i>Hom.</i>	<i>Homilia</i> (<i>Homily</i>) ... – John Chrysostom <i>et alia</i>
JBR	<i>Journal of the Bible and Its Reception</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
L&S	C. T. Lewis and C. Short, <i>A Latin Dictionary</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press)
LSJ	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, <i>Greek–English Lexicon</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1843)
NETS	<i>A New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
<i>Off.</i>	<i>De officiis</i> (<i>On Duties</i>) – Cicero and Ambrose
PG	Patrologia Graeca (J.-P. Migne)
PL	Patrologia Latina (J.-P. Migne)
RBén	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i>

<i>ThLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (Munich)
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>War</i>	<i>Bellum Judaicum</i> (Jewish War) – Josephus

I refer to *On the Destruction of Jerusalem* (*De Excidio Hierosolymitano*) as *De Excidio* and its anonymous author, “Pseudo-Hegesippus,” as “Ps-Hegesippus.” The Latin text of *De Excidio* comes from Vincenzo Ussani, ed., *Hegesippi qui dicitur Historiae libri v – Pt. 1: Textum criticum continens* (1932). All translations of Ussani’s Latin text are my own. This and the second volume, Karl Mras and Vincenzo Ussani, *Hegesippi qui dicitur Historiae libri v – Pt. 2: Praefationem Caroli Mras et indices Vincentii Ussani* (1960), appear as CSEL 66.1 and CSEL 66.2, respectively.

Abbreviations for biblical books generally follow the *SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (2014). Citations of the Hebrew Bible come from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS), Editio Quinta (1997). Citations of the Greek Jewish Scriptures – for which “LXX” or “Septuagint” sometimes appears as shorthand in the text – usually come from the edition of Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979 [1935]), though in the case of 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, and 1–2 Chronicles I have followed the “Antiochene” text reproduced in Vols. I (1–2 Samuel), II (1–2 Reyes), and III (1–2 Crónicas) of Natalio Fernández Marcos and José Ramón Busto Saiz, *El Texto Antioqueno de la Biblia Griega* (Madrid: Instituto de Filología del CSIC, 1989–1996). Citations of the Greek New Testament come from the 28th ed. of the *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012). Citations from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate Bible correspond to the Weber-Gryson *Biblia Sacra Vulgata: Editio Quinta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007). English Bible passages are generally adapted from the 1995 New American Standard Bible (NASB), and those of so-called apocryphal books from the 1989 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Talmudic texts and translations are taken from the *William Davidson Talmud* now available online at www.sefaria.org.

Generally, texts and translations are from the most accessible versions available, often Loeb Classical Library (LCL) editions from Harvard University Press. Accessible translations are also cited. This stems from this study’s aim to speak to scholars across the disciplines, from specialists in Biblical Studies, early Judaism, and early Christianity, to classicists, Latinists, and experts on late antiquity. Except where inadequate,

therefore, I have cited the best-known and most easily accessed sources, sometimes alongside texts from the critical editions. I have found no passages treated herein where the LCL readings of Josephus' Greek are markedly different from/inferior to those of the standard seven-volume critical edition by Benedict Niese, *Flavii Iosephi opera* (Weidmann, 1885–1895). Likewise, I have not found any of the LXX readings from Rahlfs herein to be a radical departure from the *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum* (1908–present).

Introduction

At an undisclosed date in the later fourth century CE, somewhere in the Mediterranean world – we do not know where – an anonymous author penned a text that remains to this day barely known to the scholarly sphere. Forty years ago, in a very short article – fittingly published in a rather obscure journal itself, *Indiana Social Studies Quarterly* – Albert Bell mused over this text’s marginality in modern scholarship. He cited its time of writing, its mixture of Christian perspective with “secular” content, and its anonymity as factors contributing to its being “all but unheard of except among a handful of late-19th and early-20th century scholars.”¹ Not much has changed. Yet whatever the reasons for this text’s subaltern status in prior research, there are many reasons why current scholarship should be interested in it. Scholars of Classics, early Christianity, ancient Judaism, and biblical studies should all know this text. It is generally dubbed *De Excidio Hierosolymitano* (*On the Destruction of Jerusalem*), and its author colloquially referred to as “Pseudo-Hegesippus.” It might well be the most important text the reader has never heard of.

De Excidio is a Latin Christian rewrite of Flavius Josephus’ earlier Greek work, the *Jewish War* (written ca. 75 CE). Ps-Hegesippus rescripts the narrative of Josephus’ first-century, seven-book account into five books for a late antique Christian audience. Already this renders *De Excidio* interesting as an instance of Greek-to-Latin adaptation and as an early, idiosyncratic, and important constituent of Josephus’ literary *Nachleben* within Christianity. In its own right, the broader Latin

¹ Bell 1980, 60.

Josephus tradition was extremely influential historically, yet within modern scholarship has been largely neglected (though change is in the wind).² As a history, furthermore, *De Excidio* is unique within Christian late antiquity in terms of genre: It is military historiography, a work whose interests, vocabulary, and literary features do not map easily onto Christian literary terrain. They are more reminiscent of their inspiration, Josephus, himself a classicizing author. Josephus, however, is far from Ps-Hegesippus' only source. He has many. Another reason *De Excidio* is important, therefore, is that it bears witness, alongside other late fourth- and fifth-century authors, to a cultural moment when Christian authors began to combine and recreate classical and Christian sources, ideas, and literary forms within the "golden age" of patristic literature.³ *De Excidio* is itself a remarkable amalgam of classical, biblical, and early Christian sources and ideas.

The Roman authors from whom Ps-Hegesippus draws ideas and language are many, including Sallust, Vergil, Horace, Tacitus, probably Livy, and others (see [Appendix 2](#)).⁴ On the Christian side, among Ps-Hegesippus' more notable contributions is his unique iteration of the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum* – the reference to Jesus Christ at Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* 18.63–64 – at *De Excidio* 2.12.⁵ Add to this a version of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul from *De Excidio* 3.2, analyzed in [Chapter 5](#). Perhaps most notable among his use of sources, Ps-Hegesippus displays a sustained engagement with personalities from the Hebrew Bible. The heroes of Hebrew antiquity emerge throughout *De Excidio*'s narrative, most often in character speeches (as in Livy).⁶ Yet, *De Excidio* is a history of the later Second Temple period (164 BCE–73 CE).

² [Levenson and Martin 2021](#) have developed the authoritative text-critical work; [Bader 2019](#) is the first critical edition of the Latin *Jewish War*; [Randolf Lukas](#) is preparing critical editions of several books of the Latin *Jewish Antiquities*; [Pollard 2015](#) has spear-headed efforts to track the reception and influence of the Latin Josephus tradition within the Middle Ages. For the state of the field see [Levenson and Martin 2016](#). The present book was written within the SNF-sponsored research project at the University of Bern entitled *Lege Iosephum! Reading Josephus in the Latin Middle Ages*, whose members – René Bloch, Gerlinde Huber-Rebenich, Katharina Heyden, Anthony Ellis, Judith Mania, Sara Moscone, Lena Tröger, and I – are contributing to this area of study. See, e.g., [Huber-Rebenich 2020](#).

³ [Young 2004](#).

⁴ [Sanford 1935](#), 134, confidently lists Sallust, Ammianus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Livy, Vergil, Horace, Seneca, Lucan, Terence, Ovid, Cicero, Solinus, and Quintilian as "quotations and imitations."

⁵ See *De Excidio* 2.12.1 and cf. 2.5.2; 5.2.1; 5.32.1; 5.44.1.

⁶ See [Chaplin 2000](#).

Such characters thus have no place as historical actors within its narrative. Josephus seldom discusses biblical figures during his *Jewish War*, Ps-Hegesippus' major source: Josephus' *War* mentions David, for instance, four times, Abraham twice, Moses just once. Ps-Hegesippus mentions such figures far more frequently: He names David twelve times, Abraham ten, and Moses eleven, in addition to a plethora of biblical figures whom Josephus never mentions in the *War* (e.g., Aaron, who does not appear in *War*, appears ten times in *De Excidio*; see [Appendix 1](#)). So an obvious question is this: Why are these figures there? Why does *De Excidio*, a work manifestly about later Jewish history, whose narrative *begins* in the mid-second century BCE, mention King David a dozen times? Why do Moses and Aaron (and their arch-enemies Dathan and Abiram), Saul and Jonathan, Abraham, Elisha, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Joshua, and many, many more, all receive multiple mentions in a history whose events transpired centuries after their lifetimes? This is the question this book seeks to answer.

In this book I show how Ps-Hegesippus employed biblical heroes (*exempla*) in rewriting the story of how the Jews came to be effectively erased from history at the end of the Roman–Jewish War (66–74 CE). In a work purporting to record the causes, details, and consequences of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE – an event that Ps-Hegesippus understood as illustrating the irreversible divine abandonment of the Jews on account of their rejecting and killing Jesus Christ – numerous ancestral figures from the Bible serve various rhetorical purposes. Identifying this literary phenomenon as a particular type of discourse (exemplarity), and explaining how it works, proves a productive way to venture into and get to know *De Excidio* as a text.

In this book I will argue that the Hebrew heroes of the Bible formed an important means by which Ps-Hegesippus understood and articulated Jewish identity and history. I will argue that to understand how Ps-Hegesippus used these biblical *exempla* one must understand Greco-Roman historiography as a literary genre, its use of speeches, and its use of the Roman discourse of exemplarity. I will argue that Ps-Hegesippus drew upon these cultural commonplaces alongside biblical, Christian, and Jewish inspirations in deploying biblical personalities and stories as ways to frame what he presents as the end of Jewish history: the Roman–Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple. I will argue that in so doing Ps-Hegesippus betrays fascinating aspects of the reception of the Bible, the combination of Christian and classical culture, and the rhetorical fabric of anti-Jewish discourse in late antiquity. In the end,

I will argue that *De Excidio*, viewed through the lens of its biblical *exempla*, can help shape our understanding of Christianization, classicism, and early Christian discourse in and around the later fourth century CE; of the importance of biblical figures within the ancient Christian imagination; and of the place of historiography as genre and exemplarity as discursive practice within late antique Christianity.

First and foremost, however, a study of the biblical *exempla* in Ps-Hegesippus serves as a means of introducing *De Excidio* to the contemporary scholarly world. No English monograph has appeared on this work to date. The book-length studies of *De Excidio* that have emerged – a corpus composed of lexical surveys,⁷ unpublished dissertations,⁸ and a recent Italian monograph⁹ – are little known and rarely cited. And even where these works have broached the subject of biblical figures in *De Excidio*, there has never been a synthesizing survey of these figures that satisfactorily explains their presence and function. Chiara Somenzi's 2009 book, *Egesippo – Ambrogio: Formazione scolastica e Cristiana a Roma alla metà del IV secolo*, comes closest. Yet Somenzi's commendable work is a short survey of a number of features of *De Excidio*, a conventional introduction as it were. It is framed as an examination of the proximity between *De Excidio* and Ambrose of Milan, to whom the work has often been attributed, a framework that restrains its ability to examine more closely the Hebrew heroes of *De Excidio*. The question remains, however: Why would a study of the biblical figures in *De Excidio* serve as an adequate introduction to that work for modern scholars?

One way of introducing an obscure text is to survey the defining features of the work: authorship, provenance, date, literary character, language, sources, context(s), narrative structure, themes, and so on. Andrew Cain's recent monograph on the *History of the Monks of Egypt* demonstrates how beautifully such introductions can be done.¹⁰ Somenzi's book, which takes a similar approach to *De Excidio*, is exceptionally helpful. Be that as it may, I have chosen a different approach for several reasons. First, the work of a "conventional introduction" to *De Excidio* can be dispatched in the course of one chapter (see [Chapter 1](#)),

⁷ Dwyer 1931; McCormick 1935.

⁸ Bay 2018; Bell 1977 is the most often-cited study and thus the ad hoc authority in contemporary scholarship; Estève 1987 is almost never discussed and is extremely difficult to access (maybe a handful of physical versions exist, plus a microfilm), though it covers a great deal of ground and is a must-read for anyone working on *De Excidio*.

⁹ Somenzi 2009.

¹⁰ Cain 2016.

largely because the text's date, authorship, and provenance cannot be precisely determined. Nor are they strictly necessary to undertaking a literary analysis of that work. Second, I think a study of the biblical figures that appear in *De Excidio*, figures who emerge across the work's five books, can serve to introduce the most important and characteristic features of the work. Third, I believe that such a directed approach is most likely to produce a study of interest to a diverse readership, whether scholars of ancient Judaism or early Christianity or Classics or the Bible and its reception. At the very least, the present study comes to conclusions that are germane to each of these disciplines.

Earlier I posed the driving question of this study: Why do heroes of the Hebrew Bible appear throughout *De Excidio*, a history about neither the Bible nor its heroes?¹¹ My answer, my thesis, is this: The heroes of the Hebrew Bible help Ps-Hegesippus articulate an aesthetically and rhetorically compelling Christian supersessionist vision of Second Temple period Jewish history.¹² These figures function as *exempla* whose legacies serve to frame, explain, intensify, decorate, and assess their own ethnic descendants, the Jews, within the perspective of Christian history-writing. Their usage speaks to the knowledge, authority, and ability of our anonymous Christian historian. They usually appear in Ps-Hegesippus' character speeches, a subgenre of classical historiography especially inclined to employ national *exempla*.¹³ These biblical figures, then, help drive the rhetoric of *De Excidio*'s anti-Jewish narrative. *De Excidio* may be read as a historical argument that Jerusalem's downfall (along with its Temple) in 70 CE was its final destruction (*supremum excidium*, a phrase Ps-Hegesippus uses many times). Ps-Hegesippus casts this event as irreversible, divinely sanctioned, and brought on by the Jews themselves. *De Excidio* is an attempt to write the Jews out of history – the Hebrew heroes of proto-Jewish history help craft that narrative.

The biblical *exempla* in *De Excidio* also testify to Ps-Hegesippus' resemblance to and engagement with the discourse of exemplarity as developed within earlier Greco-Roman literature, especially historiography. This is one of the broader points this book seeks to make. It shows

¹¹ I use the term "heroes" in its broadest sense as famous personalities whose personas are larger than life.

¹² Christian "supersessionism" refers to the notion that the Christian Church came to take the place of the Jews (descendants of the Hebrews/Israelites) as God's chosen people in history.

¹³ Marincola 2010. Estève 1987, XXV, mentions the expansion of speeches and the use of rhetorical *exempla* as two ways in which Ps-Hegesippus follows "des grands historiens."

inductively what *De Excidio* is (a particular kind of text combining several cultural and literary traditions); in so doing, it provides broader insight into the classical genre of historiography, the Roman-era practice of exemplarity, and the machinations of the Christian anti-Jewish imagination, all of which collide in striking ways in *De Excidio*. I return to this broader contribution at the end of this Introduction and in the Conclusion. For now, we need to define terms. What do I mean by “historiography” and “exemplarity,” and why am I talking about them?

By classical historiography I mean a specific, recognizable, yet malleable genre of literature that existed in Greek and Roman antiquity.¹⁴ This genre is usually traced from the Greek *Histories* (or *Inquiries*) of Herodotus of Halicarnassus (c. 484–425 BCE) to the Latin *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus (c. 330–400 CE),¹⁵ the latter a contemporary of Ps-Hegesippus. The authors conventionally included within the spectrum of Greco-Roman historiography produced prose accounts of past events that were presumed to be real; that is, plausible and true to life. Classical historiography was a self-innovating enterprise, but some literary features appear across the traditional canon. These often include a prologue justifying and explaining a work’s subject matter and situating it vis-à-vis other works; occasional authorial interventions, sometimes in the first person, in the form of *sententiae*, narratorial observations, or statements of judgment; an emphasis on spatial (geographical, topographical) and temporal context and movement; the propensity to describe (often in the form of *ekphrasis*) certain objects or events in detail;¹⁶ a proclivity for recounting military and political events; a tendency to focus on virtuous/villainous deeds and/or national or ethnic stereotypes; a penchant for “praise-and-blame” rhetoric (i.e., epideictic oratory), best known from ancient funeral orations and lawcourts; and, perhaps most characteristic of all, speeches put into the mouths of historical characters that may color, explain, and interpret the narrative in various ways. Texts classified as “historiography” within Greco-Roman antiquity tend to contain these features.

De Excidio belongs to this genre of literature. That is to say, all of these identifying features apply to *De Excidio*. Aside from its overtly Christian

¹⁴ Marincola 1999.

¹⁵ Marincola 2007b, 1.1–9.

¹⁶ In this Ps-Hegesippus follows Josephus, whose ekphrastic descriptions (particularly geographical and architectural) resemble similar tendencies in Thucydides and Livy, e.g., as argued by Bilde 2016, 99.

perspective, the language, literary character, and overall subject matter of the text look and sound more like the narratives of this classical tradition than any of the historical writing produced by Ps-Hegesippus' Christian peers.¹⁷ *De Excidio* is a traditional history about war. It describes battles and political maneuvers, focusing on martial deeds, intrigue, geography, and a progression of wartime causalities. Christian actors are mentioned a grand total of one time in the narrative (*De Excidio* 3.2). This renders Ps-Hegesippus not only "one of the first Christian historians," but "the very first to attempt to write about a non-ecclesiastical topic." Military history was what Greek and Roman historians conventionally wrote about; it was *not* what fourth-century Christian historians wrote about. Much of the time, *De Excidio* does not feel like a necessarily Christian text. This is why Albert Bell observed that "Pseudo-Hegesippus writes in the classical historiographical fashion, and he seems to have been the first Christian to attempt to do so," comparing the relationship between *De Excidio* and Josephus' *Jewish War*, its main source, to the relationship between Livy's *Ab Vrbe Condita* and its Greek source, Polybius' *Histories*.¹⁸ In fact, all work that has treated *De Excidio* at length – including scholarship in English, French, German, and Italian – has recognized in it a Christianizing version of classical historiography, and thus a singular contribution to late antique literature.¹⁹ This has several implications.

For one thing, this means that *De Excidio* is an appropriate object of study not only for scholars of ancient Christianity, but also for specialists in ancient historiography. More to the point, it means that approaching *De Excidio* requires a knowledge of the commonplaces and capacities associated with classical historiography. (Here, briefly, it may be helpful to note that throughout this study I use "classical" and "Roman" and "Christian" and "Jewish" as descriptive adjectives that I find useful, but that are neither mutually exclusive nor clear-cut – that is, no clear, discrete entities stand behind these adjectives, and to call a thing or person or idea "classical" or "Roman" does not mean, for instance, that said thing is therefore *not* "Christian" and/or "Jewish" per se.)

In [Chapter 1](#), we will return with greater gusto to the question of what reading *De Excidio* as classical historiography means for the present study. Here we may simply note that history-writing as it is done

¹⁷ Bay 2021f.

¹⁸ Bell 1977, abstract, 46–47.

¹⁹ Somenzi 2009; Schlmeier 2009, 196, 219–22; Estève 1987.

today is, as scholars have recognized, quite different than historiography as practiced in the ancient Roman world in which Ps-Hegesippus wrote.²⁰ There, historiography was a branch of rhetoric (rhetoric being the basis for all ancient education).²¹ This means that ancient readers approached historiography with expectations about literary ornamentation and style of the kind often associated with oratory,²² or poetry. Lucian of Samosata (c. 125–180 CE), when differentiating the historian from the orator in his *How to Write History*, stresses the poetics of history-writing as much as anything else.²³ In the Greco-Roman world, what generally qualified a work of history as “true” could have as much to do with a work’s plausibility and aesthetic qualities and presentation as it did with the confirmability and irrefutable demonstration of historical “facts.”²⁴ While authors varied in their perspectives, style generally spoke volumes to a history’s believability in the ancient world, and an author’s impartiality was often felt to be as important as rigor of research. Ancient readers and writers saw historiography as designed not only to record past events, but also to entertain and to teach. The genre was multivalent, and modern eyes must look to it with caution.

Of course, *all* history is constructed, *all* language rhetorical in nature, which has caused some to question whether ancient and modern historiography are all that different. Moreover, it is perennially debatable whether or not it is helpful to speak broadly about literary “genres” and their more or less strict “rules” in Greco-Roman antiquity. However, by almost any definition ancient works of history tend to share a concern with plausibility, vividness (entertainment value), impartiality, and moral correctness (both prescriptive and descriptive), which only partially overlaps with contemporary historiography. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is by one definitive similarity and one defining difference. On

²⁰ Here I follow Woodman 1977, 35: “To the ancients the writing of history was a literary process directly comparable with oratory or poetry: using the material which was handed down or otherwise available to them, they aimed at embellishing and inflating their subject matter, and at surpassing their predecessors in stylistic achievement. They had no conception of scientific history, which is mainly a 19th-century notion, with the result that the modern historian, to whom historical research is scientific, needs to keep these considerations continually in mind.” This position has been controversial and influential: Kraus, Marincola, and Pelling 2010, 1–14.

²¹ See Woodman 2015.

²² See Damon 2007.

²³ See Lucian *Quomodo Historia conscribenda sit* 50–51. My thanks to John Marincola for pointing me to this important passage. Cf. Aristotle *Poetics* 9 and Thucydides 3.1–4.

²⁴ See Wheeldon 1989.

the one hand, ancient and modern history-writing have in common the characteristic mode of third-person, indicative-mood prose. They both present themselves as recording “things that occurred.” On the other hand, ancient historiography routinely puts stock rhetorical speeches into the mouths of its characters. Now imagine reading a speech given by a historical character, maybe John Adams or Winston Churchill, within a modern work of history. Were you to encounter this, you would assume that the speech was somehow, somewhere recorded verbatim. Were it not, it would not count as history but historical fiction. But ancient historians scripted speeches for their narrative actors all the time. The fact that modern historians have made it a perennial question to ask whether or not such speeches are “reliable” (i.e., transcripts) underscores how odd the modern historiographical imagination finds this feature of ancient historiography. In critical ways, therefore, ancient history-writing mirrors not modern history-writing, but modern historical fiction. It is an interesting accident of history that the most important scholar of Ps-Hegesippus in the later twentieth century, Albert A. Bell, Jr., went on to spend the bulk of his career writing historical fiction.²⁵

Speeches within classical historiography epitomize the literary and aesthetic nature of the genre.²⁶ Woodman made this point well. He argued that “[v]erbatim speeches and classical historiography are a contradiction in terms,” painting a picture of classical history-writing as an exercise more literary and creative than what we would call “scientific.”²⁷ This is particularly important for the present work. A great deal of the material we will examine comes in the form of speeches attributed to characters within *De Excidio*’s historical narrative. These speeches are “made up” in the sense that they are not verbatim transcripts, nor do they report the words that people actually spoke on any given occasion. After all,

²⁵ See www.bookseriesinorder.com/albert-a-bell-jr. Accessed 24 April 2021.

²⁶ A. J. Woodman (1988) and T. P. Wiseman (1994) are two names in Classics connected to what is sometimes called the “literary turn” in the study of ancient historiography (cf. Fornara 1988, 99). They helped expose some fundamental differences between classical and modern historiography and made influential arguments about the stakes of such observations.

²⁷ Woodman 1988, 13, who also states that “[i]f my analysis is correct, it means that there is no theoretical basis what-soever for the view that classical historiography resembles its modern namesake. Historiography was regarded by the ancients as not essentially different from poetry: each was a branch of rhetoric, and therefore historiography, like poetry, employs the concepts associated with, and relies upon the expectations generated by, a rhetorical genre” (x).

Ps-Hegesippus is a fourth-century writer describing first-century events. But they are allegedly plausible scripts, not fictional addresses so far-fetched as to constitute fantasy literature. Such speeches are designed to record the kinds of things that certain people might, could, or would (or should) have said on given occasions.²⁸

Understanding this is key for appreciating the present study. The host of biblical personalities mentioned in *De Excidio* appear largely within the literary confines of character speeches, mostly versions of speeches from Josephus' *Jewish War* that Ps-Hegesippus revised in the process of rewriting that history. The lion's share of the present study will concentrate on speeches, delivered by Agrippa (2.9), Josephus (3.17, 5.15–16) and his Jewish comrades in arms (3.16), Matthias (5.22), Titus (5.41), Eleazar (5.53), and once by the narrator himself (5.2). It is therefore important to know what role such speeches played for ancient authors and audiences. Ancient historians used speeches to dramatize and decorate their narratives, to suggest causal connections between historical events, to explore the motives and thoughts of their narrative characters, to offer alternative perspectives, to characterize their speakers, to articulate popular debates current in their own times, often with many of these uses coalescing within one speech.²⁹ Ancient readers knew this. They knew that when they read (or heard) speeches within histories they were looking at (or listening to) orations constructed by historians for both aesthetic and didactic purposes,³⁰ and they knew to pay attention to such speeches for clues as to how a historical moment, or character, or sequence was to be understood. The readers of *De Excidio* therefore ostensibly knew when they encountered speakers in the narrative talking about biblical figures that this signaled an important interpretive passage within the work.

Umberto Eco's theory of a "model reader"³¹ bids us assume that *De Excidio*'s readers will have recognized the biblical characters that text mentions. When encountered in speeches, such readers would have read the presentation of biblical personalities as constituting the rhetoric deployment of *exempla*, "examples," a feature of Roman culture so

²⁸ Woodman 1988, 10, 93.

²⁹ See Marincola 2007a.

³⁰ But convention makes the practice no less remarkable, and no doubt effective: Fornara 1988, 31, *et alibi*.

³¹ Eco 1984, 7: "The author has ... to foresee a model of the possible reader ... supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them."

common as to constitute a *sine qua non* of our understanding of the ancient Roman world. That world was, to borrow Sinclair Bell's terms, "thick with precedent."³² While the identification and use of national, ethnic, and/or ethical role models appears to be a nearly universal phenomenon across time and cultures, scholars agree that the Romans evinced a distinctive use of *exempla*.³³ Thus scholars are comfortable talking about Roman exemplarity as a discernible discourse,³⁴ defined both by the socio-ethical (often national) contexts in which it is deployed and by a cluster of interrelated Roman virtues, reflected in Latin vocabulary, which it conjures.³⁵ Throughout this study, we will see Ps-Hegesippus developing his own exemplary discourse – biblical, Christian, and anti-Jewish – upon this Roman foundation.

Ps-Hegesippus has his speakers refer explicitly to ancient heroes as *exempla*, and *exemplum* language appears throughout *De Excidio* as a means by which author and characters assess, evaluate, and inform human behavior and its consequences, whether individual or social, past or present. When Josephus and his Jewish comrades in arms are arguing over the respective advantages of committing suicide versus capitulating to the Romans at the Battle of Jotapata, the first king of Israel – King Saul – enters the conversation. Josephus' fellows argue that Saul embodies noble *deuotio* in his willingness to die for his country (*De Excidio* 3.16.1); Josephus, on the other hand, says that Saul is a poor model for how to die well, a "perfect example" (*egregium exemplum*) of someone whom God had abandoned (3.17.1). Or again, in a speech near the end of the work, Titus mentions Abraham and Jephthah as ancestral figures who embody the Jewish penchant for self-destruction (both are famous for having sacrificed, or almost sacrificed, their children); he then states that there are "many other examples like this" (*multaque alia huiusmodi exempla*) that can help explain what kind of race (*gens*) the Jews are (5.41.2).³⁶ This kind of *exempla*-based, historical logic is a bedrock of

³² Bell 2008, 2.

³³ E.g., Marrou 1982, 231–36.

³⁴ See recently Langlands 2018; Roller 2018.

³⁵ Including *uirtus* (courage), *aequitas* (justice), *fides* (loyalty), *pietas* (sense of duty towards gods, fatherland, relations, and others), *severitas* (strictness), *fortitudo* (bravery), *constantia* (perseverance), *continentia* (self-control), *paupertas* (poverty), *pudicitia* (sexual virtue), *clementia* (mercy), *moderatio* (moderation). Litchfield 1914, 28–35; Langlands 2018, 16.

³⁶ See further *De Excidio* 1.32.6; 1.44.8; 2.4.1; 2.17.1; 3.13.1; 3.16.1; 3.24.1; 4.4.2 (×2); 4.10.1; 4.20.1; 4.26.1; 5.30.1; 5.31.2; 5.53.1 (×3). Ps-Hegesippus uses the *exempl*-root 20 times, exactly 4 times per book on average. Livy, by comparison, in the 35 extant

how Ps-Hegesippus conceives the Jews vis-à-vis their ancestors, and it is far from the case that such a discourse always manifests itself via Latin *exempl*-root terminology. The same way of thinking is equally obvious in passages that lack such language, such as the line of Agrippa's speech in *De Excidio* 2.9.1 where he states to the Jewish forces that "the affairs of your fathers constrain you" (*adstringunt uos negotia patrum*); that is, to lay down arms before the Romans. Nor is such a logic restricted to the narrative's Jewish characters: Titus uses the same basis to embolden his men in a speech at *De Excidio* 3.24.1 (addressing them as *Viri Romani*), bidding them to go forth by reliance on their "ancestral strength" (*freti patria uirtute*). Titus continues: "our fathers often put to flight great numbers of the enemy with a small force."³⁷ Like all ancient Roman historians, Ps-Hegesippus takes this way of reasoning – the conceptual heartbeat of Roman exemplarity – for granted, both for himself as historian and for his characters as historical actors. Thus, it is natural that biblical *exempla* are in *De Excidio* paradigms for understanding and negotiating the "present," both from the narrator's perspective and in the minds of the narrative's characters, even if they are not always explicitly identified as *exempla* per se.

Jane Chaplin's well-known study on *Livy's Exemplary History* defines an *exemplum* as "[a]ny specific citation of an event or an individual that is intended to serve as a guide to conduct ... and hence an opportunity to learn from the past."³⁸ Drawing inspiration from Chaplin's work, this is what I mean by referring to the biblical figures that appear within *De Excidio* as (biblical) *exempla*: These figures, and the exploits for which they are remembered, serve as recognizable, authoritative reference points within the particular ancestral tradition – the legacy of the

books of his originally 142-book work, uses the *exempl*-root 115 times, an average of 3.3 times per book: Packard 1968, 2.472–73. Book for book, the lexical evidence therefore suggests that Ps-Hegesippus and Livy are on a par as authors concerned with *exempla* of various kinds (their works have similar book lengths). *Exemplum* also has a few functional equivalents at places in *De Excidio*: For example, when at 1.24.2 we are told that the many wounds Antipater had accrued on his body served as "an illustrious testament to his virtue" (*egregium uirtutis suae testimonium*) before Caesar, the term *testimonium* is a functional equivalent of *exemplum* as it is used by Ps-Hegesippus elsewhere in the work (i.e., at 3.17.1, where *exemplum* is used with *egregium* and modified by the genitive to describe a particular individual as distinctive).

³⁷ *De Excidio* 3.24.1: *Maiores nostri magnas hostium copias parua manu frequenter fuderunt.*

³⁸ Chaplin 2000, 3: "by far the most frequent context for an *exemplum* is within a speech, either direct or indirect, where the speaker extracts meaning from history and attempts to persuade others of his interpretation."

ancient Hebrews/Israelites – salient to Ps-Hegesippus’ account of Jewish history. They are tools that allow *De Excidio*’s readers to learn from the past. This didactic role is not only for teaching future behavior, but also for evaluating and judging past behavior. Ps-Hegesippus does not use biblical *exempla* to teach his readers how to behave (though he will show his story’s characters using them thus); rather, he uses them to pass judgment upon the behavior of peoples of the past, particularly the Jews. By diverse means and to various effects, the biblical *exempla* of *De Excidio* allow the reader to learn from the past and thus interpret, and pass judgment upon, the actions of characters in the work’s first-century narrative present.

As with the discussion of historiography qua genre, we will get further into *exempla* and exemplarity as a lens with which to view *De Excidio* at the end of the next chapter. In the remainder of this Introduction, I will briefly forecast the different parts of this study. Methodologically, this study focuses on a close reading of *De Excidio*’s Latin text. It is deeply Eusebian in presentation, containing many block quotes. This study is not ashamed of its textuality. For one thing, no adequate modern translation of *De Excidio* exists, so these chunks of text render a service in and of themselves. For another, an argument like the present one requires constant recourse to the text itself. In presenting so much text I see myself as laying bare the “data” that I am using. This study proceeds as a close reading of a specific aspect of *De Excidio*: the passages in which biblical figures appear in that work. It employs various analytical tools where appropriate. These include intra- and extra-textual lexical comparison, where certain terms appear crucial for cross-referencing passages or linking *De Excidio* to particular branches of biblical, Roman, and/or early Christian traditions; thematic comparison between *De Excidio* and its classical and/or Christian precursors (or peer parallels); textual criticism of both *De Excidio* and biblical texts; source-critical analysis of *De Excidio* vis-à-vis Josephus’ *Jewish War* (and other source texts); and literary, rhetorical, and narratological analysis. Applied to *De Excidio*’s biblical *exempla*, these analytical tools reveal a rich, lively, intriguing text well worth our attention.

As already mentioned, [Chapter 1](#) introduces *De Excidio* to the reader. The eight content chapters that follow may be divided into two sections of four chapters each: [Chapters 2–5](#) deal with themes that help define *De Excidio* as a work, arguing that Ps-Hegesippus uses biblical *exempla* as a key means of carrying certain discourses through his narrative; [Chapters 6–9](#) then deal with a critical series of passages in *De Excidio* where

biblical *exempla* are most prominent. In these latter chapters, we explore aspects of Ps-Hegesippus' use of biblical exemplarity to construct a distinctively Christian, but also somewhat classical, vision of Jewish history. This narrative arc moves us from work-wide phenomena through particular themes and specific individuals to certain passages, revealing broader and then more detailed aspects of Ps-Hegesippus' use of Hebrew heroes in his construction of Jewish history.

Chapters 2 and 3 treat features of *De Excidio*'s engagement with ethnography. Chapter 2 argues that *De Excidio* constructs a contrast between the ancient, noble Hebrews (*Hebraei*) and the modern, ignoble Jews (*Iudaei*) as a way of distancing the latter, the quintessential foil for Christian identity in late antiquity, from the former, a revered group celebrated within the Christian Old Testament. Chapter 3 posits that Ps-Hegesippus uses the figure of Abraham (among others) to engage in a kind of speculative ethnography of the Jews, using different historical characters to play with ideas concerning Jewish stereotypes and identity.

Chapters 4 and 5 illustrate how biblical figures fuel creative ways of portraying and evaluating the plight of the first-century Jews in *De Excidio*. Chapter 4 maintains that Ps-Hegesippus uses biblical *exempla* to drive a narrative of Jewish national decline, where the Jews are made to appear as a sorry, dilapidated, and unworthy "chip off the old block" of their much worthier ancestors. Chapter 5 contends that Ps-Hegesippus subtly, or perhaps accidentally, juxtaposes Jewish and Christian martyrdom, invalidating the former as nothing but deserved punishment and elevating the heroes of the latter to the status of legitimate martyrs, whose deaths really spoke truth to power within first-century Rome.

Chapters 6 and 7 focus in on two biblical figures who have particular prominence in *De Excidio*, but these chapters also retain a broad perspective as they examine the appearance of these personalities across numerous chapters of the work. Chapter 6 examines King David, the biblical hero who appears most often in *De Excidio*, and argues that he is characterized in a significantly different way to the portrayals that circulated among ancient Christians. Chapter 7 inspects Ps-Hegesippus' use of the prophet Elisha, who appears only three different times in *De Excidio*, but whose appearances take up unusually large amounts of narrative space (what I call "extended exemplarity"). In both of these chapters we find Ps-Hegesippus doing things with these two *exempla* that appear to resemble classical models. Moreover, both figures appear devoid of the trappings of theology and Christology to which they are almost always attached in ancient Christian literature. Without claiming

that these renderings are intentionally based on specific Roman models, I argue that these figures bear remarkable resemblance to certain classical *exempla*: For example, David is a seemingly superhuman ancient king and founder of Jerusalem, much as Romulus was for Rome; Elisha in *De Excidio* resembles the Roman general Marcus Furius Camillus inasmuch as both were remembered not for one particular deed or moment, as with most traditional *exempla*, but were attached to several extended scenes that took up significant space when recounted by later authors. Such correspondences, I suggest, signal *De Excidio*'s propensity to surprise the modern reader at how Roman – which is to say classical – it often feels.

Chapters 8 and 9 each approach a substantial pair of sequential chapters in *De Excidio*. Together, these four passages represent the densest collection – by far – of biblical *exempla* within the work, making these studies a kind of culmination of *De Excidio*'s exemplarity. Chapter 8 deals with *De Excidio* 3.16 and 3.17, which record a set of speeches made respectively by Josephus' Jewish comrades at the Battle of Jotapata and then by Josephus himself. Here I claim that Ps-Hegesippus interacts with the *Roman* discourse of exemplarity per se by constructing, based on the shorter versions of these speeches from Josephus' *Jewish War*, an *exemplum*-filled debate between Josephus and his fellow soldiers. This dialogue broaches a set of values that resonate strikingly with ancient Roman culture. Chapter 9 investigates *De Excidio* 5.15 and 5.16, also based on shorter Josephan originals, which together comprise the largest collection of biblical *exempla* in the text. In this chapter I trace an argument through these twin speeches that Josephus makes – at Titus' behest – to his Jewish countrymen holed up behind the walls of Jerusalem. I contend that these scripted orations encapsulate the essence of Ps-Hegesippus' discourse of biblical exemplarity: While overtly serving an anti-Jewish historical vision, the use of biblical *exempla* in these extended passages signals ideas and argots associated with biblical, classical, and Christian traditions. These speeches epitomize *De Excidio* as a work: They show how Ps-Hegesippus' appropriation of the right to tell Jewish history gains inspiration, authority, and aesthetic appeal by sourcing biblical, classical, and early Christian texts and, most notably, biblical *exempla*.

I have attempted through these chapters to craft a narrative that adheres closely to the topics that engage my primary thesis. But it is unavoidable along the way that we come to appreciate other aspects of *De Excidio* as well. By book's end the reader should have not only come to appreciate how Ps-Hegesippus' exemplary discourse of Hebrew heroes helps frame

his history – the reader should also have gained a deeper sense of what *De Excidio* is as a work and of the kinds of new things Ps-Hegesippus might be able to tell us about how historiography, exemplarity, and biblical interpretation could function between Christianization and Classicism in late antiquity.

One particularly notable contribution that *De Excidio* can make to current scholarship is an expansion and correction of how scholars have tended to understand historiography within early Christianity. Christian historians of late antiquity did not restrict themselves to relating the history of the Church or of Christians (church history) and/or to penning the global, panchronic prose of the (world) “chronicle.” They also told the same kinds of “true stories” as did their non-Christian peers: stories of war, of intrigue, of speeches, of romance, of the rise and fall of nations, and of the everyday events of life. As the reader becomes familiar with *De Excidio* throughout this study, therefore, I hope she will also begin to imagine anew the kinds of things that Christian authors could and did talk about when sitting down to write history over 1,500 years ago, which consisted of far more than quintessentially Christian topics concerning Church councils or embodied holiness, liturgical minutiae or the new best way to identify and combat demons.

The story told in this study has implications first and foremost for our understanding of *De Excidio*: It helps us appreciate *De Excidio* as an early piece of Christian historiography whose form is classical in important and idiosyncratic ways. It helps us understand Ps-Hegesippus as an author adapting the Roman cultural discourse of exemplarity to the biblical tradition, and the capacity of that discourse to inform a Christian take on Jewish history. But the implications of this story are also much broader. They speak to what the heroes of their Old Testament meant to the Christians of late antiquity; to how Christians imagined and articulated Jewish history in the fourth century as a sad story of a depraved people who constituted a remnant of a bygone age; to how Christians wrote history in late antiquity; and to the ways in which Christian authors appropriated and adapted aspects of Roman culture to the novel contexts of an increasingly Christian world – all within the first century of a newly *Christian* Roman Empire. We return to each of these elements in due course. For now, however, we must lay the groundwork for studying *De Excidio*.

I

On the Destruction of Jerusalem *Christian, Classical, Biblical, Josephan*

This chapter offers a conventional, though necessary, introduction to *De Excidio*. By chapter's end, the reader will understand what *De Excidio* is, why it is important, and the complications associated with studying it.¹ In addition, I show at the end of this chapter why historiography as a genre and exemplarity as a discourse provide helpful, even necessary lenses for viewing *De Excidio*, thereby establishing a framework for the ensuing chapters.

The work I am calling *On the Destruction of Jerusalem* (*De Excidio Hierosolymitano*),² sometimes dubbed *De Excidio Urbis Hierosolymitanae* in the manuscripts, has not always been known by that name.³ Some scribes entitled the work *Historia Iosippi* or *De Bello Iudaico*. Adamnan of Iona (c. 625–704) apparently cited it as the *Iudaicae Captivitas*.⁴ Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636), who cites *De Excidio* quite a bit, seems to identify it (only once) as the *Historia*.⁵ Bede (c. 673–735), while quoting it often, never names it.⁶ As we will see, the obscurity of *De Excidio*'s title emblemizes a work that, on the whole, eludes many of scholars' most basic questions.

AUTHOR

Louis Feldman once remarked with typical wit that, around the turn of the twentieth century, guessing at *De Excidio*'s anonymous author was

¹ The best short introduction to date is Leoni 2006, 483–85.

² Codex Taurinensis D IV 7, an apograph of the earliest manuscript (M¹), contains this title.

³ Bell 1977, 3–4.

⁴ Adamnan *De Locis Sanctis* 20; Bieler 1956.

⁵ Isidore *Etymologiae* 19.1.21; CSEL 66.2: 429.

⁶ Pollard 2015, 79–81.

“one of scholarship’s favorite indoor sports.”⁷ I dare say this exaggerates *De Excidio*’s modern popularity, even in its heyday. But it is true that *De Excidio*’s authorship has been an embattled issue. To begin with, the “Hegesippus” of “Pseudo-Hegesippus” likely comes from a conflation of the anonymous author of *De Excidio*, never called “Hegesippus” before the ninth century, with the second-century chronicler who penned a five-book *Recollections* (*Hypomnēmata*),⁸ a major source of Eusebius’ *Church History*.⁹ Orthographically, “Hegesippus” (or “Egesippus”) began as a correction of “Iosippus” (or “Iosephus”) within the manuscript tradition.¹⁰ Eucherius of Lyon (c. 380–449), the earliest author to quote *De Excidio*,¹¹ and the eighth-century *Liber Scintillarum* are examples of early attributions of the work to *Iosephus*.¹² On several levels, therefore, the pseudonym “Pseudo-Hegesippus” is testament to a confused tradition.

The actual author of *De Excidio* is no clearer. Ambrose of Milan (c. 340–397) is the author to whom this work has been most often attributed, though many have refuted this identification.¹³ I do not believe that Ambrose penned *De Excidio*, mostly due to the content and tenor of the work. But it is undeniable that *De Excidio* betrays more lexical, thematic, and ideological overlap with Ambrose than with

⁷ Feldman 1984, 41.

⁸ Jerome’s *De viris illustribus* 22.1, where a five-book history is attributed to Hegesippus (*historias texens ... quinque libros composuit*), likely accounts for this conflation (cf. 2.3–5).

⁹ Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.3–19; 3.11, 16, 19, 20.1–7, 32.1–8; 4.8.1–2, 11.7, 21, 22.1–9.

¹⁰ The transposition from *Iosippi* to *Egesippi* is illustrated on f. 67v of Codex Ambrosianus C 105 inf. See Leoni 2006, 483n16; Ussani 1906, 250; Niese 1895, xixn3. The explicit/incipit is to be dated to the ninth century, at Bobbio, according to Natale 1951, 1–16.

¹¹ *De Excidio* 3.6 in Eucherius *De situ Hierusolimitanae Urbis atque ipsius Iudaeae epistola ad Faustum presbyterum* (CSEL 39: 123–34).

¹² *Liber Scintillarum* 2.60; 48.11–12; 66.20 (from *De Excidio* 3.17–18); 15.29 (*De Excidio* 1.26.2); 17.39 (*De Excidio* 1.39); 58.63 (*De Excidio* 4.15); 71.24 (*De Excidio* 1.32.6); and possibly 67.14.

¹³ Arguments (or assumptions) for identifying Ps-Hegesippus with Ambrose, based on stylistic, vocabularic, and thematic congruity, appear in Lumpe 1968; Ussani 1945, 87–88; Dudden 1935, 2.703; Bardenhewer 1912, 505–6; Weyman 1905–1906; Landgraf 1902; Ihm 1889; Rönsch 1882; Teuffel 1875, 1018–21; Reifferscheid 1867. Rejections of Ambrosian authorship are voiced by Scholz 1913; Morin 1914–1919a; 1914–1919b; Klebs 1895, who wanted to date *De Excidio* to 395 but also claimed that Ammianus Marcellinus quoted *De Excidio* 3.5.11 in his *Res Gestae* 23.5.3; Vogel 1883; see also Vogel 1881, 1, stating that Erasmus in 1527 had already noted *De Excidio*’s attribution to Ambrose as spurious.

any other ancient Christian author.¹⁴ In line with Chiara Somenzi's work,¹⁵ I would suggest that, if Ambrose is distinct from the anonymous Ps-Hegesippus, then it is very likely that the two shared a similar, possibly the same, education and cultural location.¹⁶ Other arguments that have been made regarding *De Excidio*'s authorship are less convincing.

Joseph Wittig and Karl Mras suggested a certain "Isaac the Jew" as a candidate,¹⁷ an obscure Jewish convert (or not) known from later fourth-century writings like those of Jerome.¹⁸ The reason some have thought that a Jewish convert wrote *De Excidio* is mainly that Ps-Hegesippus appears to "own" aspects of the biblical past and Jewish collective identity: He speaks of the "fathers" (*patres*) or "ancestors" (*maiores*) of the Jews in ways that may signal identification with those figures (*De Excidio* 4.5; 4.18; 5.2.1–2). Ps-Hegesippus' apparent knowledge of Judea can also appear to support this argument. But of course, ancient Christians were quite comfortable staking claim to the biblical past, and cognizance of Judea's geography posits nothing concrete about a person's identity. Suggestions like this are a shot in the dark.

The great German philologist Ludwig Traube surmised from *De Excidio*'s early Spanish reception (evidenced by Isidore of Seville, Paulus Alvarus [c. 800–861], and the *Liber Scintillarum*) that its author might have been a Spaniard,¹⁹ which led G. Morin to posit one Nummius Aemilianus Dexter as its author. The latter was a friend of Jerome, proconsul of Asia, and praetorian prefect in 395.²⁰ Evidence for this identification is sparse and tenuous: It amounts to incidental correlations between Nummius' range of travel and military experience and free-ranging inferences from *De Excidio*'s narrative. More recently Albert Bell argued for Evagrius of Antioch as *De Excidio*'s author.²¹ Evagrius

¹⁴ Ussani 1933, 107, argued that, given that Ambrose died in 397 and Jerome denied responsibility for a Latin translation of Josephus' *War* in a letter from 398, Ambrose probably wrote *De Excidio* in 370 but did not publish it; after his death, when his friends found it, rumors quickly implicated Jerome. However, cf. Mras 1961.

¹⁵ Somenzi 2009 prefers a young Ambrose as *De Excidio*'s author, but see Alciati 2011 and Raimondi 2011.

¹⁶ In line with Dwyer 1931, 179, but contra McCormick 1935, 213.

¹⁷ CSEL 66.2: xxxiii–xxxv and Wittig 1906, followed by J.-P. Callu (see later).

¹⁸ Jerome *Comm. Tit.* 3.9 intimates that Isaac wasn't really a convert (*se ... in Christum credidisse simulabat*) but "perverted the hearts of the naïve" (*corda simplicium pervertisset*) by noting discrepancies between the genealogies in the Gospels (Matthew, Luke). See Morin 1899.

¹⁹ Traube 1884.

²⁰ Morin 1914–1919a, 90–91. Nummius had military experience, which would fit with *De Excidio*'s contents.

²¹ Bell 1977, 26–30.

had a firsthand knowledge of Judea and Syria, had a special connection to Antioch but also traveled to Italy,²² and is known to have produced Greek-to-Latin translations (e.g., of Athanasius' *Life of Anthony* in 363 CE). Bell's guess is not without merit, and it plays more than a little on Evagrius' proximity to Jerome, as do the suggestions of Isaac and Nummius. But Jerome provides no direct evidence of having known of *De Excidio* or its author. All of these suggestions grasp at thin straws that survive from a late antique haystack still largely obscure to us. No doubt many Christians existed in the period under question who had the wherewithal to produce *De Excidio* yet of whom we know, and will probably always know, nothing at all. Such guesses, while educated, are byproducts of the obsession of modern scholarship to establish context and authorship as items of foremost significance in ascribing meaning, status, and value to a text. Michel Foucault, and more recently Hinday Najman, have critiqued this tendency.²³ But it has not disappeared. Rather than perpetuate this wishful enterprise, in the present book I am happy to leave *De Excidio*'s authorship anonymous. Indeed, a driving ethic of this project is the conviction that *De Excidio* is important despite its anonymity, and that we can learn much from and about this text regardless of authorial identification.

To make a long story short: No one knows who wrote *De Excidio*, nor does anyone in late antiquity seem to have known.²⁴ To hazard a guess requires one to confine oneself to the vague shades between possibility and probability. Ignorance as to the identity of "Pseudo-Hegesippus" hampers a study like the present one only by barring it from drawing upon authorial biography and exact historical context; yet it also frees our study from being drawn into the assumptions and presuppositions that such knowledge is wont to encourage.

²² Bell 1977, 31.

²³ Najman 2003, 8–10.

²⁴ Cassiodorus, in his *Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning* 1.17.1, wrote: "Josephus (almost a second Livy) ... composed his books of *Jewish Antiquities* on a large scale. Father Jerome writing to Lucinus Betticus says that he was not able to translate Josephus because of the size of this prolix work [*Epist.* 71.5]. But I have had him translated into Latin in twenty-two books by my friends, a task involving great labour on their part since he is subtle and complex. He also wrote seven other marvelously clear books on the *Jewish Captivity*. Some ascribe the translation of this work to Jerome, others to Ambrose, still others to Rufinus. The fact that this translation is ascribed to such men declares the special merits of its composition." See Halporn and Vessey 2004, 149–50. The work referred to as the *Jewish Captivity* here is the seven-book Latin translation of Josephus' *Jewish War*. Both *De Excidio* and the Latin translation of the *War* were of unknown authorship, though with rumored authors, in late antiquity.

DATE

If *De Excidio*'s authorship is completely indemonstrable, its date may be ascertained with some probability. A definite *terminus post quem* presents itself at *De Excidio* 3.5.2, where Antioch is identified as the fourth city of the empire after Constantinople.²⁵ The latter was understood as such (i.e., the "new Rome") only from 324 or 330 CE.²⁶ A solid *terminus ante quem* is provided by Eucherius of Lyon, who quotes sections from Book 3 of *De Excidio* verbatim in his *Letter to Faustus* written c. 430 CE. Several dates have been suggested within this hundred-year range. Jean-Pierre Callu dated the text to between 353 and 358 CE. Callu based this argument on "le vocabulaire historico-géographique," military terminology, and the (Jewish) author's understanding of Roman-Jewish politics.²⁷ In particular, Callu based his *terminus ante quem* (358 CE) on this fact: While Ps-Hegesippus apparently refers to Palestine as a single province under a single administrative *praesidium*, the singular rule of Clematius in that province ended in 357–358, after which point Palestine became two provinces and the title of Palestina Prima's ruler changed to *consularis*. But there is no reason to assume that Ps-Hegesippus aims at exactitude concerning fourth-century Palestine: This mention of Judea appears in a speech attributed to Josephus himself, whom Ps-Hegesippus well knows was a *first-century* Jew. For a *terminus post quem* Callu identifies uprisings in Galilee in 352–353 CE as resembling in several respects the Galilean revolts recorded in *De Excidio* Book 3, especially the Jotapata narrative (both stories have rebels hiding in caves). The parallels Callu concocts are vague and unexceptional: As in the first-century Jewish revolt, events in Galilee break out as the Romans are fighting among themselves in the west; the "théâtre des opérations" is essentially the same; and diplomatic solutions materialize via ambassadors.²⁸ To cite this "third Jewish war" ("Troisième Guerre Juive") as an inspiration for Ps-Hegesippus' account is thoroughly unnecessary, and thoroughly unconvincing. Callu's arguments are conjectural, and have been

²⁵ *De Excidio* 3.5.2 (CSEL 66.1: 193): "[This] city was previously held to hold third place of all the cities in the Roman world, yet now the fourth, since Constantinople, the city of the Byzantines, has grown, which was once the capital of the Persians, who have now been expelled."

²⁶ Cameron 2006, 543.

²⁷ Callu 1987 is master of the material, his article well worth reading.

²⁸ Callu 1987, 134–35.

followed by few.²⁹ Still, Callu's work does suggest that *De Excidio* was not written *before* the 350s. In fact, when one looks at the lists of authors to whom Callu parallels *De Excidio*, these are most often late fourth-century authors, often from Antioch.³⁰

Far more plausible is the date range of 367–378 CE established by Albert Bell and suggested much earlier by Martin Schanz.³¹ On the front end this is based upon two mentions of *Britannia redacta* at *De Excidio* 2.9.1 and 5.15. Bell thinks these references signal the northern campaign of Theodosius the Elder (d. 376) to reestablish Roman hegemony in Britain in 367–368 CE,³² which would therefore be a *terminus post quem*. The argument is speculative, though plausible. Even more speculative is a complementary argument Bell makes *e silentio*: He notices that Ps-Hegesippus provides optimistic panegyrics of Roman might at *De Excidio* 2.9 and 5.46 alongside a description of the Alani and other barbarian tribes at 5.50; these evince no cognizance of the Germanic incursion of the later fourth century or the disaster at Adrianople (378 CE). On this basis Bell argues that “most scholars cite 378 as the *terminus ante quem*.”³³ Bell's speculations are more intriguing than convincing. But they do point Bell to his most compelling suggestion: that *De Excidio* emerged in the wake of and in response to the Emperor Julian's abortive attempt to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple in 363 CE.

The immediately post-Julian Christian age offers a believable context for *De Excidio* for many reasons. *De Excidio* is about the *supremum excidium* (“final destruction”) of Jerusalem and the Jews. Ps-Hegesippus' emphasis on the finality of this event is impossible to miss. Julian, of course, had threatened to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple, an embodiment of living Judaism.³⁴ Many late ancient Christians took this as a threat to their legitimacy as God's people, which is in part precisely what Julian

²⁹ Following Callu's date range and locating *De Excidio* “più probabilmente” under Pope Liberius (papacy 352–366) than under Damasus (papacy 366–384) is Zecchini 1993, 21, though with faulty reasoning. Callu's student, Estève 1987, follows his dating and identification of the author as a Jewish convert.

³⁰ For example John Chrysostom, Libanius, Ammianus Marcellinus, even the Emperor Julian, who had ties to that city.

³¹ Schanz 1914, 109 (“Nach 367 und wahrscheinlich vor 375”).

³² Bell 1977, 2. This Theodosius is also called Count Theodosius or Flavius Theodosius, father to emperor Theodosius I (347–395 CE, r. 379/392–395).

³³ Bell 1977, 2–3. It is unclear to whom Bell refers in citing “most scholars.” Perhaps Mras 1961 (CSEL 66.2: xxxi–xxxii) and the much earlier Fabricius 1858, 3.183–84.

³⁴ See now Finkelstein 2018.

intended.³⁵ *De Excidio* makes great sense when read as a response to this perceived threat. Ps-Hegesippus also writes in a distinctly classical mode. Another aspect of Julian's bureaucratic agenda involved hermetically sealing off the (teaching of the) Classics from Christians, whose cultural moorings Julian understood – not without reason – to be diametrically opposed to the values of Hellenism. Could *De Excidio* be in part an implicit response to Julian's cultural bifurcation? I think it could. Incidentally, it is worth pointing out that Julian mentions many of the Hebrew heroes who appear in *De Excidio*, and that Ps-Hegesippus' understanding of these figures is usually directly at odds with Julian's perspective. Coincidence? Perhaps. But this is one more reason to keep in mind the distinct possibility that the decade or two immediately following Julian's short reign comprise a realistic context of *De Excidio*'s writing.

In the end, it is impossible to be sure when *De Excidio* was written. Fortunately, the present study is fundamentally a literary history, which situates its analysis within a broad milieu of Christian late antiquity. However, the authors who have themes, ideas, and vocabulary in common with Ps-Hegesippus tend to be those of the later fourth century. For that reason, as well as the plethora of parallels with the writings of Ambrose, and because Ps-Hegesippus' anti-Jewish, classically engaged historiography strikes me as very likely to be part of the Christian cultural response to Julian between the 360s and 380s, I assume a date of c. 370–375 CE for *De Excidio*. This date, like the Julian hypothesis, has been accepted by most scholars since Bell. And while it cannot be proven, nor is it necessary for this book, it does make sense to have a general date in mind, so that the reader may gauge the likelihood of such a date against her own reservoir of knowledge as she encounters various aspects of *De Excidio* throughout this work.

PROVENANCE

In part because it has often been attributed to Ambrose, and in part simply because it is written in Latin, *De Excidio* has usually been seen as a product of Italy.³⁶ This has typically been more an assumption than an argument. The most compelling reason to locate the text in Italy is

³⁵ Jacobs 2004, 193–95.

³⁶ See the correct if provisional conclusion of Raimondi 2011, 147.

the provenance of its earliest manuscripts (see later), which were both produced in northern Italy within a few centuries of *De Excidio*'s writing. Alternatively, as alluded to earlier, a few scholars mused over the possibility of Spain as *De Excidio*'s place of writing due to its early popularity there. But there is good reason to think that Antioch, of all places, was either the location of *De Excidio*'s writing or at least the native region of the work's author.³⁷ Here are a few pieces of incidental evidence: *De Excidio*'s notable panegyric over and stories concerning Antioch (3.5.2; cf. Ammianus Marcellinus 23.5.3);³⁸ interest in "literal" (i.e., historical) biblical interpretation; fascination with the Maccabean martyr tradition; inclusion of an episode involving Peter and Paul (3.2); affinities with Ammianus Marcellinus (Latin historiography from Antioch in the fourth century was actually not that odd);³⁹ use of language apparently linked with fourth-century Antioch;⁴⁰

³⁷ Bell 1977, 2, 27–31; Bay 2019a.

³⁸ To add a few pieces of evidence that have not been mentioned: Ps-Hegesippus goes out of his way to divulge further information about Antioch even when mostly following his primary source: at *De Excidio* 1.30.13, Ps-Hegesippus augments Josephus' record of Herod's brief stop at Daphne (*War* 1.328) by dubbing that place a *locus amoenus* (CSEL 66.1: 57): "Herod had sought Antioch. There he rested in a pleasant enough place which they call 'Daphne', ..." (emphasis mine). Josephus *War* 1.328 simply states: "But while Herod was at Daphne, near Antioch, ..." Cf. *De Excidio* 1.41.1 vis-à-vis *War* 1.512. Later, Ps-Hegesippus adds to a speech put in Titus' mouth a reference to Antioch compared favorably to Jerusalem, which appears nowhere in Josephus' version of that speech (*War* 6.98–110): i.e., *De Excidio* 5.31.2 (CSEL 66.1: 372): "I warn you, stop disrupting the intention of Roman piety with your crimes. It will not be feared that Jerusalem be destroyed, when Antioch was preserved more for its resources [than for anything else]." Similar is Titus' speech to the Jewish rebels at *De Excidio* 5.46, where Seleucid Antioch is remembered as a one-time sovereign nation of the Jews: *De Excidio* 5.46.1 (CSEL 66.1: 399): "What, then? The reign of Antiochus, who saddled you with grievous punishments, and who snatched away your right to *religio* itself, have we not returned this very thing to you, thinking it more noble to rule through kings than to establish a kingship? Did not Antioch itself, the seat of your masters, anxiously reject its own and elect us its masters? Have you yourselves not fled to us so as to escape those very masters?" (Cf. Josephus *War* 7.323–50, where Antioch is not mentioned.)

³⁹ Rohrbacher 2013, 14.

⁴⁰ For example the apparent mistranslation of the Greek term ξενотροφεῖν ("to hire foreign troops") from Josephus' *War* 1.61 with the Latin term *xenodochia* (*De Excidio* 1.1.8). The *xenodochium* was a late ancient Christian institution for providing food and shelter for the poor and homeless first recorded at Antioch c. 350 CE. See Anderson 2017, esp. 154, who fails to recognize that Callu dealt with the subject some thirty years before (1987, 122–23). The term *xenodochia* (or ξενοδοχεῖα) appears mostly among late fourth-/early fifth-century Latin authors and/or authors associated with Antioch: Jerome *Ep.* 77.10; Augustine *In Evangelium Johannis tractatus* 97.4; John Chrysostom *Hom. Matt.* 66.3; Julian *Ep.* 49. Cf. Epiphanius' *Panarion* (75.1), from the 370s.

and stark anti-Jewish orientation.⁴¹ All of these suggest Antioch as a possible or likely provenance.

Ps-Hegesippus mentions Antioch far more often than is warranted by any of his known sources or by his narrative. He does this with no other city. He speaks of Antioch in knowledgeable and favorable terms, and betrays numerous authorial tendencies best explained by his being from or writing in Antioch. We cannot know the provenance of *De Excidio*, but Antioch seems the most likely candidate. Perhaps an author from Antioch penned *De Excidio* in (northern) Italy.

MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

De Excidio's pronounced anonymity in terms of author, date, and provenance belies the healthy popularity enjoyed by the work historically. One way of gauging *De Excidio*'s historical significance is in terms of the manuscript tradition. The written copies of *De Excidio* reveal a rich tradition from early on that continued to occupy scribes throughout the Middle Ages.

According to our current and growing state of knowledge, these are the extant manuscripts of *De Excidio* (sigla from Ussani's critical edition in bold), beginning with the most important:⁴²

M: Milan, BA C 105 inf, ff. 1r–219v (**M**¹: 5th–6th centuries **M**²: early 8th century⁴³)

C: Kassel, LB 2° theol 65, ff. 1r–158v (late 5th century)⁴⁴

B: Bern BB 180 (early/mid-9th century)

T: Turin BN D IV 7 (10th century) – an apograph of **M**¹ + **M**²

P: Paris, BnF Lat 13367, ff. 235v–240v [*De Excidio* 2.9.1] (6th–7th centuries)

⁴¹ Cf. John Chrysostom's *Discourses against Judaizing Christians* (386–387 CE), delivered at Antioch.

⁴² Information about manuscript dates generally follows Pollard 2015, and/or Gitner (forthcoming); see also Mras 1960 (CSEL 66.2: viii–xx); Ussani 1906. Information about contents usually comes from examination of the codices themselves. This list owes a great deal to members of the SNF Sinergia Project *Lege Iosephum! Reading Josephus in the Latin Middle Ages* at the University of Bern, especially Anthony Ellis, Patricia Berchtel, and Judith Mania. I am also indebted to Karen Kletter for sharing her list of English *De Excidio* manuscripts with me. See www.legejosephum.unibe.ch (accessed February 23, 2021). Most of the manuscripts listed here have been digitized; I omit the URLs for purposes of space.

⁴³ See Licht 2018, 106–8 *et alibi* and Gitner (forthcoming). My thanks to Judith Mania for her bibliographical guidance here.

⁴⁴ On the date, soon after 500 CE, see Licht 2018, 133–34.

- I: Innsbruck UB Frag 72 + Vienna ÖNB Ser n 3643 (8th–9th centuries)
 Darmstadt ULB 3316, ff. 11a–2vb (c. 800)⁴⁵
 V: Rome BAV Pal Lat 170, ff. 11a–84vb (c. 800)
 Koblenz Landeshauptarchiv Best 701 Nr. 759.22, ff. 11r–v⁴⁶ + Marburg, Hess StA
 Hr 4.17⁴⁷ (9th century)
 St. Gallen SB 626, pp. 13–310 (early 9th century)⁴⁸
 Cherbourg BM 51 (early 9th century)
 Copenhagen DKB Frags 2799 and 2800 (9th century)⁴⁹
 A: Karlsruhe LB Aug perg 82 (early/mid-9th century)
 Karlsruhe LB Aug perg 101 (early/mid-9th century)
 Laon BM 403b (mid/late-9th century)
 Paris BnF Lat 6256, ff. 30v–36v (9th century)⁵⁰
 Paris BnF Lat 12512 (mid/late 9th century)
 Leiden UB BPL 21, ff. 3–112 (late 9th century)
 Munich BSB Clm 18628 (10th century)⁵¹
 H: Leiden UB Voss Lat F (2^o) 17, ff. 165r–214r (10th century)*⁵²
 Paris BnF Nouv Acq Lat 1490 (10th century)
 Paris BnF Lat 5061 (10th century)⁵³
 Paris BnF Lat 12513 (10th century)
 Z: Besançon BM 833 (10th–11th centuries)
 Cambrai BM 678 (10th–11th centuries)⁵⁴
 Chartres BM 117 (10th–11th centuries)⁵⁵
 Naples BNN V F 34, ff. 298r–408v (10th–11th centuries)*⁵⁶

⁴⁵ Contains *De Excidio* 1.44.7–8; 1.44.8; 2.5.3–6; 2.7.1–8.1.

⁴⁶ A fragment of *De Excidio* 1.40.

⁴⁷ Four fragments containing respectively *De Excidio* 1.16.4–6, 1.16.6–17.2, 1.25.2–4, 1.25.4–26.3.

⁴⁸ Begins at *De Excidio* 1.11.2 (with *quorum rex in loca* ...).

⁴⁹ Frag. 2799 contains excerpted text from *De Excidio* 2.1–2 and frag. 2800 excerpts from *De Excidio* 1.45–2.4.

⁵⁰ Alongside excerpts of Justin, Sallust, and Josephus (in Latin), this manuscript contains quotes, paraphrases, and notes on selections of *De Excidio* from 1.38 to 5.20. Thanks to Richard Pollard for sharing his transcription of this manuscript.

⁵¹ Excerpts of *De Excidio*, beginning with 3.2 (*Passio Petri et Pauli*), with excerpts from the early fifth-century Christian poet Coelius Sedulius.

⁵² *De Excidio* comes after the Latin *Antiquities* 1–12 and 17–20. The manuscripts marked with * constitute a group that contain part of the Latin version of Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* (usually Books 1–16) and *De Excidio*, kinds of “editions” of Josephus' oeuvre (*Antiquities* 17–20, Josephus' *War*, and *De Excidio* all cover more or less the same historical material).

⁵³ Begins at the end of *De Excidio* 1.12.3.

⁵⁴ *De Excidio* 1.1.1–4.15.1 [?].

⁵⁵ Manuscript destroyed in 1944.

⁵⁶ Contains Latin *Antiquities* 1.24–16.379 + *De Excidio*, the latter counted as Books 17–21 of *Antiquities*, though with a note in a late hand on f. 299r reading “This is not Josephus' book” (*Iste liber non est Josephi*). This datum borrowed from notes made by Anthony Ellis, who has my thanks. Also, *De Excidio* in this manuscript ends in 5.40.1

Monte Cassino Compact VIII + Monte Cassino Compact III + London/Oslo
 Schøyen Coll MS 183 (early 11th century)⁵⁷
 Florence BML Amiat. 2 (mid-11th century)
 Arras BM 519 (826) (11th century)
 Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 149 (E. 5), ff. 1r–134v (11th century)⁵⁸
 Florence BML Plut 89 sup 15, ff. 157v–253v (11th century)
 Florence BML Plut 66.1, ff. 255r–338v (11th century)*
 Rome BAV Lat 1998, ff. 168v–219v (11th century)*⁵⁹
 Vendôme BM 103, ff. 4r–91v (11th century)⁶⁰
 Valenciennes BM 548 (late 11th century)

(with *deest nostris calamitatibus* on f. 408v, a line that, remarkably, appears partway through the infamous “Maria Story”). Where *De Excidio* begins, three folio pages of the end of Latin *Antiquities* 16 (ostensibly containing 16.380–94) have been cut out, which is why it ends with 16.379b (f. 297v). (N.B. As is well known in some circles, all Latin *Antiquities* manuscripts end with Book 16 at 16.394, lacking 395–404, which perhaps were never translated from the Greek.) My thanks to David Levenson here, to be regarded as *the* contemporary expert on the text of the Latin *Antiquities* (and Latin War).

⁵⁷ These three fragmentary manuscripts belong together: Newton 1999, 277n179. Monte Cassino VIII consists of seventy folio pages, with missing pages in between, containing the following portions of *De Excidio* by folia: ff. 1–4=1.6.1 (*quis conatibus...*) to 1.16.1 (...*offerens uer[is]*); ff. 5–9=1.21.1 (*Antipatri et Hyrcani...*) to 1.30.3 (...*paucos galile[orum]*); ff. 10–14=1.33.1 (*probassem...*) to 1.40.1 (...*inuiideretur et nocendi*); ff. 15–17=1.40.7 (*suam constituere oportere...*) to 1.42.3 (...*patrum quibus ego*), less a lacuna jumping from 1.41.6 (*ditatus...*) to 1.41.9 (...*uehebatur* [in place of *cohibebatur*]); f. 18=2.11.4 (*[aduer]tit. nec ullo alio...*) to 2.13.1 (...*ut illic*); ff. 19–24=2.18.1 (*[con]tule[rant]*...) to 3.13.1 (...*uictoriae traianus*); ff. 25–27=3.17.1 (*[det]erreantur ceteri...*) to 3.24.1 (...*Nos in pace*); ff. 28–40=3.26.1 (*Phiale autem...*) to 4.25.2 (...*circumsonabat. Iohannes*); ff. 41–43=4.26.1 (*[circ]umsistunt gladiis...*) to 5.1.2 (...*Symone et eze[chia]*); ff. 44–45=5.4.4 (*[desc]endente cesare...*) to 5.9.4 (...*sub modio era[t]*), followed by a missing folio; ff. 46=5.12.2 (*[prostra]to telum...*) to 5.14.5 (...*ut ipse*); ff. 47–60=5.16.1 (*[sacer]dotium inter...*) to 5.36.2 (...*defuere muner*); ff. 61–66=5.36.2 (*uulnere miseret...*) to 5.50.1 (...*ignota nostris*); ff. 67–70=5.53.1 (*namque is in illo suggestu...perierimus*) in addition to a section from 2.8.2 (*uincula raperetur...*) to 2.9.1 (...*in occasu quondam*), erroneously sutured in from f. 68r, column 1, row 10. See Ussani 1929, 601–2 Ussani marks the Monte Cassino Compact VIII text mosaic as the most ancient exemplar of a text family of *De Excidio* also containing Vatican Lat 1987, Vatican Lat 1998, Florence Plut 66.1, Florence Plut 67.17, Florence Plut 89 sup 15, and Naples V F 34. London/Oslo 183 contains *De Excidio* 1.2.10 and 3.5 (recto) and 1.1.7, 9 (verso).

⁵⁸ Also contains a fragment from Justinian’s *Digest* on ff. 1r–IIIv.

⁵⁹ Contains Latin *Antiquities* 1–20 + *De Excidio*. However, following the end of Latin *Antiquities* 20 (f. 167r) there is a blank page (167v), followed by a page containing a scarcely legible ending of Latin *Antiquities* 16 (168r), before the beginning of *De Excidio* (168v). The text of Latin *Antiquities* earlier in the manuscript contains Book 16 all the way to the end (16.394). In other words, the text of *De Excidio* in this manuscript was once attached to a different text (*strictu sensu*) of Latin *Antiquities* that is no longer extant (at least in this codex). Thanks to David Levenson for his observations.

⁶⁰ *De Excidio* Prol 1 through the middle of 5.41.2 (...*fuisse incolas des*).

London Lambeth Palace 173 (11th/12th century)⁶¹
 Paris BnF Lat 14641 (early 12th century)
 New Haven YU BRBL 280 (early/mid-12th century)
 Edinburgh NL Advocates 18.3.9 (early/mid 12th century)
 Naples BN XV AA 13, f. 63r-v (12th century)⁶²
 Paris BnF Lat 5064, ff. 2r-140r (12th century)
 Saint-Omer BM 700 (12th century)
 Troyes BM 287 (= Clairvaux Abbey Q 32) (12th century)
 Boulogne-sur-Mer B de la ville 140 (12th century)
 Cambridge UL DD.9.4 (12th century)
 Glasgow UL Hunter 20 (S.2.10) (12th century)
 Liège UL 26 (12th century)⁶³
 London BL Additional MS 10097 (12th century)
 Worcester Cathedral F.30 (12th century)
 Douai BM 878, ff. 1v-109r (mid-12th century)
 London BL Harley 59 (mid-12th century)
 Winchester Cathedral 20 (mid-12th century)
 Oxford JC 63 (1149-1176)
 Liège UL 16, ff. 1r-103r1 (mid/late 12th century)
 Admont ÖAW Benediktinerstift Cod 132 (later 12th century)
 London BL Harley 1334 (later 12th century)⁶⁴
 Oxford Bodleian 697 (late 12th century)⁶⁵
 Munich BSB Clm 10056, ff. 217v-219v (late 12th/early 13th century)⁶⁶
 Bamberg SB Class. 81 (12th-13th centuries)
 Munich BSB Clm 15841 (12th-13th centuries)*⁶⁷
 Cambridge UL KK.I.27 (13th century)
 Copenhagen DKB Frags 1340 and 1341 (13th century)⁶⁸
 Pisa BC 20, ff. 52r-69v (13th century)*
 Boulogne-sur-Mer BM 139 (late 13th century)⁶⁹
 Siena BC F IV 17, ff. 1-66 (early 14th century)
 Florence BML Plut 67.18, ff. 52r-115v (14th century)⁷⁰
 Glasgow UL Hunter 368 (V.1.5) (14th century)
 Rome BAV Lat 1987 (14th century)

⁶¹ *De Excidio* Books 2-3, entitled: *In duo libri Egesippi de victoriis romanorum*.

⁶² The *Passio Petri et Pauli* (*De Excidio* 3.2) alongside other martyr tales.

⁶³ Begins in the middle of *De Excidio* 1.1.1 (...*regis filius, ubi Aegyptum...*).

⁶⁴ Ends midway through *De Excidio* 5.53.1 with (...*milia quingentos. In urbe...*) on f. 91v.

⁶⁵ The text begins partway through *De Excidio* 1.1.2 (...*in uiro ad exitum...*) and ends toward the end of 5.53.1 (...*circumvallauit hostis omne mu...*).

⁶⁶ Fragment containing *De Excidio* Prol 1-1.9.

⁶⁷ Latin *Antiquities* + *De Excidio* + Latin *War*. Dates to c. 1300.

⁶⁸ These fragments contain a middle portion of the speech at *De Excidio* 5.16.1 (1340) and the end of 5.16.1 and the very beginning of 5.17.1 (1341) respectively. Penned by a well-known Norwegian scribe, these fragments comprise the northernmost extant manuscript of *De Excidio*. My thanks to Åslaug Ommundsen for information on these fragments.

⁶⁹ Apparently a compilation of *De Excidio* and Josephus' work(s).

⁷⁰ Contains *De Excidio* 1-4 alongside Eutropius' *Historia* and Florus' *Epitome*.

Rome BAV Lat 1992, f. 171r (14th century)⁷¹
 Vienna ÖNB 369, ff. 5a–6b (14th century)⁷²
 Farfa BMN 46 (14th/15th centuries)⁷³
 Bologna BUB 386 (15th century)
 Bologna BUB 987, ff. 21v–22v (15th century)⁷⁴
 Bologna BUB 1468, f. 192v (15th century)
 Copenhagen DKB GKS 1572 (15th century)
 Cortona BC (304) 387.2, f. 60r–v (15th century)⁷⁵
 Florence BML Plut 19 sin 3 (15th century)
 Florence BML Plut 67.17, ff. 1r–190v (15th century)⁷⁶
 London BL Harley 03691 (15th century)*⁷⁷
 Madrid NLS 10189, ff. 1–124 (15th century)⁷⁸
 Paris BnF Lat 9704 (15th century)
 Prague NK CZ X E 3, ff. 1v–3r (15th century)⁷⁹
 Venice BNM Lat Z 390 (15th century)
 Vienna ÖNB 3141, ff. 165r–269v (15th century)⁸⁰
 Basel UB F V 38, ff. ar–av (mid-15th century)⁸¹
 New York JTSAL NH65 (mid-15th century)⁸²

⁷¹ A few lines from *De Excidio* Prol. 1 added to a tenth-century manuscript with Josephus' *War* and Jerome's chapter of *De viris illustribus* on Josephus.

⁷² Contains excerpts of Latin Josephus, *De Excidio*, Eusebius, and Richardus Parisiensis within a codex full of fragmented excerpts.

⁷³ Two fragments without shelfmarks that appear as no. 46 in Boynton 2001, 351–52. The fragments contain respectively *De Excidio* 3.20.2 (*proterebantur, plerique cum ipsis in profundo sidebant*) and 4.4.3–6.2 (*arma interdictum ... resistebant quo*). Many thanks to Susan Boynton for sending/discussing her findings with me.

⁷⁴ The *Passio Petri et Pauli* (*De Excidio* 3.2) amid other excerpted texts.

⁷⁵ *De Excidio* 1.44.2 alongside fragments of Josephus *War* 7 and Josephus *Antiquities* 8 amid many other works.

⁷⁶ Alongside histories by Eutropius, Iordanes, and Gregory of Tours.

⁷⁷ Latin *Antiquities* + Latin *War* 1.552–2.373a, 5.366b–7.455 + *De Excidio*.

⁷⁸ *De Excidio* here appears alongside Hippocrates' *Letter on the Care of Democritus* (ff. 126r–33v) and Pseudo-Aristotle's *Treatise on the World* (or the *Cosmography of Alexander*). The spine of the covers has an old (but not fifteenth-century) reading: *Egesippus de rebus Romanorum* (*Hegesippus on the affairs of the Romans*).

⁷⁹ *De Excidio* 3.2 (the *Passio Petri et Pauli*) alongside other excerpted works, including the Latin *Jewish Antiquities*, Latin *Jewish War*, and Rufinus' *Church History*.

⁸⁰ I have not included Berlin SB PK Theol Lat fol 284, ff. 13r–14v (eleventh century), containing biographical data on King Herod and Queen Mariamne supposedly extracted from Eusebius, Hegesippus, and Josephus. I have been unable to verify any lines from *De Excidio* therein.

⁸¹ Contains *De Excidio* Prol. 1 to the very beginning of 1.1.4 (...*huic successit Ionathas* [sic]) followed by an epitome of the Latin *Jewish Antiquities* and an epitome of the Latin *Jewish War*.

⁸² Previously called MS 459 from the library of the monastery of St. Justin of Padua, and then later Phillipps 884. The JTS Library website dates the text to “1300” or the fourteenth century and contains other erroneous information about the manuscript, its translator, modern scholarship, and the manuscript's peculiarities.

Erfurt UB 2° 006, ff. 1–105 (1455)⁸³

Salamanca BH USAL 76 (1457)⁸⁴

Philadelphia PL LJS 237 (ca. 1460)⁸⁵

Frankfurt am Main Carm. 12 (mid/late 15th century)

Siena BCI K VII 3, ff. 84v–86r (mid/late 15th century)⁸⁶

Modena BE Lat 181 = alfa O 6 21, ff. 127v–128r (mid/late 15th century)⁸⁷

Munich BSB Clm 748 (Vict 35), ff. 36r–58v (1497/1498)⁸⁸

Würzburg M ch f 128 (ca. 1500)

In addition to these manuscripts and fragments proper, one should include here the *Recapitulatio* of *De Excidio*, extant in four manuscripts and discussed later in the chapter, as well as the remarkable work called the *Epilogue of Hegesippus by the Blessed Ambrose* contained in ff. 1r–25v of the fifteenth-century manuscript Liège UB 147.⁸⁹ The number

⁸³ In a manuscript also containing writings of Bernard of Clairvaux (ff. 106–17, 166–89), Gregory the Great (ff. 120–50), Pope Innocent III (ff. 150–65), Isidore of Seville (ff. 190–202), Giles of Rome (ff. 204–67), and Michael Scotus (ff. 268–83). The Erfurt UB website lists the date as “1434/1466.”

⁸⁴ On the final folio (184r), the last ten lines are largely destroyed from water damage.

⁸⁵ This designation corresponds to a digital facsimile of an ornate illuminated manuscript of *De Excidio* that resides in private hands, one of few such private *De Excidio* manuscripts (others have included, I believe, New York NH65, Glasgow Hunter 20, and New Haven BRBL 280). Thanks to Patricia Berchtel for helping me track down this manuscript and so many others. Philadelphia LJS 237 was most recently sold by Lawrence J. Schoenberg to an unknown buyer through Sotheby’s auction house for £79,250 on July 6, 2010. This codex contains some of the most extensive and most interesting marginalia and annotations of all extant *De Excidio* manuscripts.

⁸⁶ *De Excidio* 5.44.2, after Josephus’ *Antiquities* 4.96–99 (f. 84r–v), and alongside various versions of *Vitae Parallelae* and *De viris illustribus*.

⁸⁷ *De Excidio* 5.44.2.

⁸⁸ A collection of random fragments from *De Excidio* Prol to 5.53.1 in a barely legible script.

⁸⁹ This title comes from a red *explicit* following the end of the work (f. 25v): *Explicit epylogus beatus Ambrogii ex egesippo*. The heading to the work (f. 1r), however, reads *Excerptum beatus Ambrogii ex Egesippo*. So far as I know, this manuscript is unique in that, lacking the Prologue, it contains all of *De Excidio*, from 1.1.1 to 5.53.2, yet in a highly and intentionally condensed form (which is why it can fit *De Excidio* into twenty-five two-sided, two-columned folio pages). Here is what this “epilogue” does to *De Excidio* 1.1.1 (bold text is retained, italicized text is omitted): *Bello Parthico, quod inter Macchabaeos duces gentemque Medorum diuturnum ac frequens uariaque uictoria fuit, incentium dedit sacrilegii dolor, quia rex Antiochus cui nomen Illustris, Antiochi regis filius, ubi Aegyptum quoque suo imperio adiunxit, in superbiam elatus, quod ei incerta bellorum prosperauissent, ritus Hebraeorum neglegi mysteriaque eorum profanari iussit, idque postulantibus plerisque Iudaeis statuere ausus*. The next line begins *De Excidio* 1.1.2. Here this text retains less than 50 percent of Ps-Hegesippus’ Latin (twenty-three of fifty-four words), and it similarly condenses the rest of the narrative. It is worth noting that the *Epilogue* or *Excerpt* only takes up a third of this manuscript: The latter two-thirds (ff. 29r–76v) contain the *Book of Pastoral Rule* (*Regulae Pastoralis*) penned by Pope Gregory I around 590.

of extant manuscripts of *De Excidio* make it one of the most widely copied (and read?) works of antiquity.

The most important manuscripts begin with Codex Ambrosianus C 105 inf. (M = M¹ + M²), a Frankenstein-esque tome that is the earliest known manuscript of *De Excidio* (M¹). It contains a beautiful semi-uncial script on high-quality parchment whose lacunae were later filled in with what Adam Gitner calls “a crude, pre-Carolingian miniscule.”⁹⁰ The text has been digitized by the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, so anyone can see the stark contrast between the faded, better, older script (in columns) right alongside the messy, later, greenish hand (e.g., at 135v/136r or 139v/140r). Also available digitally is the other late antique manuscript of *De Excidio*: Codex Casellanus 2^o theol. 65 (C). (The other late antique witness is a sixth- or seventh-century fragment of BnF Lat 13367 [ff. 235v–240v] containing the speech of Agrippa from 2.9.1.) Unfortunately, neither of these earliest witnesses contains the first dozen or more chapters of the work: M begins at *De Excidio* 1.15.3 (*sed cum adhuc* ...) and C starts with *De Excidio* 1.13.2 (*At illa spirans* ...). This makes Codex Turensis D IV 7 (= T), a tenth-century apograph of M, all the more important as a textual witness.

For the purposes of the present project, the takeaways from *De Excidio*’s manuscript tradition are these: The text is witnessed already in late antiquity and exists in a number of early medieval manuscripts across a significant geographic span (several dozen before the twelfth century alone that we know of). Moreover, many fragments and excerpts testify to its practical use and hint at an interested readership. *De Excidio* was a popular text, much copied and much read – Gitner does not overstate the case when he speaks of *De Excidio*’s “enormous popularity with medieval readers.”⁹¹ Nor did the text’s popularity subside with the advent of the printing press.

TEXTS, TRANSLATIONS, AND CRITICAL EDITIONS

This book relies upon the standard critical edition of *De Excidio*: Vincenzo Ussani, ed., *Hegesippi qui dicitur Historiae libri v – Pt. 1: Textum criticum continens* (CSEL 66.1; Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1932).⁹² Ussani’s edition, relying upon the best and earliest manuscripts, provides

⁹⁰ Gitner (forthcoming) discusses the poem celebrating the Synod of Pavia (698 CE) on f. 121r as a clue to the place and date of the text’s repair.

⁹¹ Gitner (forthcoming).

⁹² Ussani died before he could write a preface to his work. The second volume, with introduction, appendices, and helpful discussion, was undertaken by Karl Mras 1960 (CSEL 66.2).

a solid textual basis. The age of the edition is somewhat of a boon because it means that the text is public domain in many countries: One can find it on Google Books. A more accessible version of Ussani's Latin (without critical apparatus) has been digitized by the Università del Piemonte Orientale as part of the *Biblioteca digitale di testi latini tardoantichi* (digilibLT).⁹³ The irony of such accessibility to a text that has received almost no detailed attention in recent scholarship should not be lost on the reader. Nor should the fact that this unknown text received two critical editions between the later nineteenth century and earlier twentieth.⁹⁴ Ussani's critical text eclipsed the earlier edition of Karl Friedrich Weber, completed upon Weber's death by Julius Caesar [sic]. This text was published as Karl Friedrich Weber and Julius Caesar, eds., *Hegesippus qui dicitur sive Egesippus: De Bello Judaico – ope codicis Cassellani recognitus* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1864).⁹⁵ The advantage of Ussani's edition is its use of the all-important M (and T) in addition to the other oldest/most important witnesses used by Weber–Caesar, namely C and B (see earlier).

Of course, *De Excidio*'s print history is much older than its critical editions. The *editio princeps* was produced in Paris in 1510 by J. L. E'Taples,⁹⁶ to be followed by many subsequent printings (many of which are available on Google Books, including multiple versions of the 1510 edition).⁹⁷ Yet, despite its antiquity and its several editions, *De Excidio* is not yet available in any modern scholarly translation. An Italian translation was made in 1544,⁹⁸ a French translation in 1556,⁹⁹ and a German

⁹³ See <http://digiliblt.lett.unipmn.it/xtf/view?docId=dltooo241/dltooo241.xml;brand=default>. Accessed February 23, 2021.

⁹⁴ See the detailed overview in Bardenhewer 1912, 506.

⁹⁵ This edition had already been listed previously in nine publications of the Universität Marburg between 1857 and 1863. The Caesar–Weber text reappeared shortly thereafter within the six-volume collection of Ambrose's works collected by Ballerini, 1875–1883, 6.1–276.

⁹⁶ J. L. E'Taples, *Aegesippi historiographi fidelissimi ac disertissimi et inter christianos antiquissimi historia de bello Iudaico. Sceptri sublatione. Iudaeorum dispersion. Et Hierosolymitano excidio. A divo Ambrosio Mediolanen. Antistite e Graeca Latina facta. Cum eiusdem anacephaleosi et tabellis congruentiarum cum Iosephi libri etiam de gestis Machabaeorum* (Paris: Ascensius/Josse Badius, 1510).

⁹⁷ On subsequent printings, including the second printing of the works of Ambrose in the *Mauriner-Ausgabe* in 1781–1782 (the first was produced by J. du Frische and N. de Nourry in 1686–1690 in Paris), later to be reprinted in J.-P. Migne's *Patrologia Latina* 15 in 1961, see Bardenhewer 1912, 506.

⁹⁸ Pietro Lauro Modonese, *Historia d'Egesippo tra i christiani scrittori antichissimo de le ualorose imprese fatte da giudei ne l'assedio di Gierusalem e c* (Venice: Michel Tramezino, 1544).

⁹⁹ J. Millet, *Les cinq livres de l'histoire d'Egesippe* (Paris: Gilles Gourbin, 1556).

translation in 1574.¹⁰⁰ I have found no Early Modern English translation. *De Excidio* will have been accessible to many European readers by the seventeenth century. Yet, for all that, in recent years it has hardly been translated afresh. Dominique Estève's dissertation does include a French translation of Books 1–4, but this translation was never formerly published and is very difficult to access.¹⁰¹ The only other modern translation of which I know is that produced by Wade Blocker in 2005 and made available online by Roger Pearse.¹⁰² While this translation cannot be used uncritically, it has rendered the text popularly accessible. Blocker's was always a nonscholarly translation, not designed for publication, and criticisms like those lodged by Leah Di Segni (published on Roger Pearse's website) are unnecessary and unhelpful. More apt is Richard Pollard's comment that Blocker's translation is "useful if inelegant."¹⁰³

So: Historically *De Excidio* has been widely accessible. The Latin manuscript tradition was robust and diffuse, the early print tradition witnessed many printings and translation into at least three languages, and the nineteenth and twentieth centuries issued two critical editions. The lack of a usable modern translation has surely contributed more than a little to the text's anonymity and disuse in more recent years. I anticipate producing a translation of *De Excidio* in the future, and the block translations in the present book mark a step in that direction.

CONTENTS

De Excidio narrates the end of the Second Temple period within Jewish history, from the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple in 516 BCE, after its first destruction by the Babylonians in 587/586 BCE, to the destruction of the second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. A central concern of *De Excidio* is to explain why that Temple would never be rebuilt. Here is the work's Prologue:

[1] Having myself already followed with my pen the four Books of Kingdoms which the sacred scripture contained, all the way up to the captivity of the Jews and the destruction of the wall and the triumphs of Babylon, I have composed

¹⁰⁰ Conrad Lautenbach, *Egesippides Fürtrefflichen und hochberühmten Geschichtschreibers/von Zerstörung der Statt Jerusalem* (Strasbourg: Rihel, 1574). My thanks to Lutz Doering for bringing this translation to my attention.

¹⁰¹ Estève 1987. A translation of Book 5 of *De Excidio* is underway at the University of Strasbourg, France, under the leadership of Frédéric Chapot.

¹⁰² See www.tertullian.org/fathers/hegesippus_00_eintro.htm. Accessed February 23, 2021.

¹⁰³ Pollard 2015, 70n14.

them in the manner of history. Likewise, a prophetic report has related briefly the deeds done by the Maccabees. Of what remains, up to the burning of the temple and the spoils of Titus Caesar, Josephus, famous for his historical composition, is the one who reports it; yet would that he had attended to reverence and truth as much as the investigation of events and the prudence of speeches. For in his speech itself, which he gave forth concerning their punishments, he shows himself to be a participant in the faithlessness of the Jews, whose arms he deserted, yet whose sacrilege he did not relinquish. He grieved the misfortune with tears, but did not intuit the cause of the same.

[2] Hence it was our concern, not relying upon wealth of genius but on the application of faith, briefly to proceed a bit further into the history of the Jews beyond the sequence of sacred scripture, so that – as though seeking a rose among thorns – among the savage deeds of the impious, which were dealt with by a price worthy of their impiety, we may unearth something either of reverence for the sacred law or of wonder at the sacred plan, which, albeit for wicked heirs, had been either a pretext among adversities or an honor in prosperous times; at the same time, as it is indicative of domestic improbity, let it be clear to the world that they themselves were the authors of their own fitting destruction, in the first place because they turned the Romans, who were concerned with other things, against them, and invited attention to their kingdom – for whom it was better to be ignored –, they asked for friendship while not intending to keep faith; they violated the peace, being unequal in virtue; and in the end they instigated war for whom all hope was in their walls, not in their manly strength, when at the same time to be shut up by siege is of all things a miserable one, which, even when it proceeds well, generally increases rather than diminishes dangers.

[3] And lest any suspect us of having undertaken a task devoid of faith and superfluous, let us consider the entire Hebrew race as it has been led by its leaders, so that it may be crystal clear whether from the loins of Judah the succession of his line never wavered or whether it really did fail in the series of its leaders, but remained in him in whom all things stood restored and who himself was the hope of nations. Therefore, henceforth let me take up my introduction.

De Excidio Prologue 1–3¹⁰⁴

Prologues of this kind, as mentioned in the Introduction, were par for the course in classical history-writing.¹⁰⁵ Ps-Hegesippus establishes his work within his own oeuvre, taps into the authority of tradition by naming his main source, and justifies his own history by citing the shortcomings of that source: Josephus “did not understand” (*non intellexit*) why Jerusalem was destroyed. Further, Ps-Hegesippus establishes his

¹⁰⁴ CSEL 66.1: 3–4. On *historico stilo* cf. Ambrose *Ep.* 1.63.21, who refers to the Acts of the Apostles thus (CSEL 66.2: 464). To the final phrase compare Sulpicius Severus *Chron.* praef. 3: *nunc initium narrandi faciam*.

¹⁰⁵ Lucian *Quomodo Historia conscribenda sit* 52–54, noting how “the best historians” (οἱ ἀριστοὶ τῶν συγγραφέων) had written prefaces.

Christian correction of Jewish historiography in what we would call religious terms: Josephus and the Jews are characterized by *perfidia*, while Ps-Hegesippus purports a narrative founded upon *religio*, *ueritas*, and *fides*. His reference to other works – the “four Books of Kingdom” (i.e., 1–2 Samuel + 1–2 Kings, then 1–4 Kingdoms in the LXX and Vulgate) and the *propheticus sermo* on the *res gestae* of the Maccabees – renders *De Excidio* the final installation of a three-volume set on Jewish national history. That is: Ps-Hegesippus sets himself up as narrating the *end* of Jewish history. In so doing, *De Excidio* connects a historical background and series of events to a theological commitment that had become axiomatic to Christians by the fourth century: namely, that in the post-Jesus world Jews as Jews had become insignificant within the divine plan of history.

At the end of the Prologue, Ps-Hegesippus betrays his perspective. The implicit question he answers is: If Jerusalem (and the Jews) was destroyed by the Romans, what are we to make of the prophecy of Genesis 49:10: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples”? The answer, for Ps-Hegesippus, is that this promise of divine blessing, to be realized in power and rule, did not continue unbroken from the ancient Israelite kings through the leadership of later Jewish history. Rather, at the advent of Jesus Christ it passed over to Christ, whom Christians identified as the “lion of Judah.”¹⁰⁶ This issue, embodied in Gen 49:10, was a *crux interpretum* for early Christian historians: Eusebius (c. 260–340) framed his *Church History* with this passage in the early fourth century,¹⁰⁷ and Sozomen (c. 400–450) began his *Church History* in the fifth century by quoting Jacob’s prophecy: “the rulers of the Hebrews from the tribe of Judah, the tribal leader, shall fail.”¹⁰⁸ Perhaps not coincidentally, the Emperor Julian, whose knowledge of Judaism was based largely in the biblical text, also used this verse, marshaling it against Christian claims of being the “true Israel” in his *Against the Galileans*.¹⁰⁹ In direct antithesis to Julian, Ps-Hegesippus frames his study by means of this trope as a critical analysis of the (interrupted) descent from ancient Hebrew heroes to “modern” (first-century) Jews – Jerusalem and its Temple and legitimate national leadership (royal and

¹⁰⁶ Rev 5:5, playing on Gen 49:9–10. See Bay 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 1.6.1.

¹⁰⁸ Sozomen *Hist. Eccl.* 1.1, who certainly knew Eusebius’ *Hist. Eccl.*, but maybe *De Excidio* as well. See Urbainczyk 1997, 364.

¹⁰⁹ Julian *Contra Galilaeos* fr. 62. See Somenzi 2009, 153–57; Finkelstein 2018, 55.

priestly) are two sides of the same coin for Ps-Hegesippus. *De Excidio* is a story about how both disappeared at the end of the Second Temple period.

Book 1 begins the narrative proper with the infamous sacrilege perpetrated by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (216–164 BCE).¹¹⁰ In 167 BCE, he attempted to quash Jewish ritual and Hellenize the Jews by replacing the usual sacrifices at the Jerusalem Temple with the pagan sacrifice of a pig (to Zeus) on the altar there. It did not work. *De Excidio* relates how the Seleucid monarch's notorious ban on the "rites of the Hebrews" (*ritus Hebraeorum*) sparked the well-known Maccabean revolt (167–160 BCE). But Ps-Hegesippus does not camp on this time period, being far more interested in the events of several hundred years later. Thus, the reader may be surprised to find Ps-Hegesippus speeding through the most celebrated of the Hasmonean heroes, the patriarch Mattathias and his son, Judas "Maccabeus" ("the Hammer"), who initiated the Maccabean revolt, in a few short lines (*De Excidio* 1.1.2–3). Indeed, Book 1 races through second- and first-century BCE history, paying passing attention to the inner workings of the Hasmonean dynasty (140–37 BCE) and the ill-fated Herodian household.¹¹¹ Importantly, Book 1 records the (in)famous entry of Pompey – whom *De Excidio* routinely praises – into the Jerusalem Temple and its inner sanctum (1.17). Book 1 ends with a laconic statement about the death of Herod the Great (r. 37–4 BCE): *hunc finem habuit Herodes*. This is also where Book 1 of Josephus' *Jewish War* ends, but for a Christian author it marks a particularly expedient break: Jesus was thought to have been born at that time, and the death of the evil King Herod constitutes a trope of early Christian culture.¹¹²

Book 2 begins with the chaotic aftermath of Herod's demise, and continues to walk through Roman-Judean history à la Josephus. It includes entertaining stories, standard in classical historiography since Herodotus, such as at *De Excidio* 2.4, where the cavalry commander Mundus tricks a chaste Paulina into sex by posing as the Egyptian God Anubis (cf. Josephus *Antiquities* 18.65–80).¹¹³ Ps-Hegesippus also takes time to pass moral

¹¹⁰ The narrative of *De Excidio* follows that of Josephus' *Jewish War* to a considerable degree; see later discussion.

¹¹¹ The "Hasmoneans" are only mentioned by name, however, at 2.13.1 and 2.13.7, as those who took over the priesthood briefly, eventually exchanging legitimate succession for election.

¹¹² He was, for Christians, the "archetype of evil"; Marshak 2015, xxii.

¹¹³ See MacRae 2021.

judgment on the Roman Emperor Tiberius (r. 14–37).¹¹⁴ Particularly significant in Book 2 is 2.12, in which Ps-Hegesippus inserts his version of the Testimonium Flavianum (cf. Josephus *Antiquities* 18.63–64)¹¹⁵ and discusses Jesus, John the Baptist, and divine providence as it relates to Christians and Jews in history. This chapter insinuates Christian identity into *De Excidio*’s historical narrative, reasserts Josephus’ faithfulness qua historian but faithlessness qua Jew, and again places Jesus at the center of historical causality. By 2.14 Ps-Hegesippus has brought his history up to the twelfth year of Nero’s rule (r. 54–68 CE), the year (66 CE) that marks the historical advent of the “final” conflict between Judea and Rome (the Jewish War from 66–73 CE).¹¹⁶ Book 2 ends on a low note, recording the military exploits, then pitiable death, of Simon the Scythopolitan (Scythopolis = Beth Shean), a noble Jewish warrior who killed his family and himself (2.18) following his participation in a mass slaughter of fellow Jews (2.17). This occurs just after the defeat of the Roman Governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, by the forces of Antipatris, which took place in late November of 66 CE.

Book 3 thus begins toward the end of Nero’s reign. *De Excidio* 3.2 contains an idiosyncratic episode from the Apocryphal Acts of Peter correlated to that reign. Peter has a run-in with his traditional arch-nemesis Simon Magus. Predictably, Peter is vindicated, Simon, a courtesan of Nero, embarrassed. The chapter ends in the martyrdoms of both Peter and Paul. The rest of Book 3, and indeed the rest of the work, concentrates on the Roman–Jewish conflict within Judea that started in earnest in 66 CE. Vespasian and Titus come to take their narrative place in *De Excidio* during the course of Book 3, which ends just after Vespasian’s victory at the naval battle on the Sea of Galilee (Josephus *War* 3.522–31). This occurred in late August, 67 CE.

Book 4 continues the narrative of war in Judea with some geographical descriptions thrown in. It recounts the death of Nero (*De Excidio* 4.20.1 and 4.21.1) and of Galba and Otho, and the rise of Vitellius (4.26.1). It records Vespasian’s devastating campaign in Judea and arrival at Jerusalem (4.25), as well as Vitellius’ unseemly assassination (4.32), ending with the advent of the Flavian Era. Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian

¹¹⁴ *De Excidio* 2.5.1 (CSEL 66.1: 139) links the Paulina episode already mentioned with Tiberius’ moral depravity: “For this reason I did not want to pass over this mockery which occurred during Tiberius’ reign, that the vileness of that emperor may be surmised from it.”

¹¹⁵ See generally Whealey 2003, and 30–34 for *De Excidio*.

¹¹⁶ Mason 2016a.

are all active in Book 4's final chapter (4.33), as the narrative moves toward its *telos* of pitched battle at Jerusalem. Narratively, Book 4 ends with Titus gathering troops and moving up the eastern Mediterranean coast; literarily, it foreshadows the coming tide of war: "And now the harshness of winter was abating" (*et iam hiemis asperitas deficiebat*).

Book 5 mashes together, dissects, augments, and reforms Books 5–7 of Josephus' *Jewish War*, constructing its own unique narrative from the wreckage. It consummates a Christian understanding of Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE, the divine role therein, and its implications for Jews thereafter. The beginning of Book 5 presages the whole: "In the first year in which the *imperium* was conferred upon Vespasian, Judea was being torn apart by savage battles and internal sedition."¹¹⁷ *De Excidio* 5.1 sets the stage for an extended focus upon a dying Jerusalem, and in 5.2 the author speaks in his own voice to Jerusalem (and the Jews) as to a city "once blessed" (*quondam beata*) but now "deceived" (*decepta*) and racked by warfare (*expugnata*). In 5.3 the narrative momentum picks up in earnest with Titus moving menacingly toward the holy city. The remainder of Book 5 records the well-known story of Jerusalem's downfall, selectively adapting Josephus' storyline and lengthy speeches. This book contains a detailed *ekphrasis* of the city of Jerusalem (5.9), which involves an explicit reference to Ps-Hegesippus' Trinitarian theology; a lengthy expansion of the moving scene of the death of Matthias and his sons at the hands of the villainous factional leader Simon Bar-Giora (5.22//Josephus *War* 5.27–33); and a few short chapters that make explicit the connection between biblical prophecy and Jerusalem's destruction (5.31) and Jesus' death and the destruction of the Jews (5.32): "this is he whose death marks the destruction of the Jews" (*hic est ille, cuius mors Iudaeorum excidium est*; 5.32.1). Ps-Hegesippus' version of the infamous Maria Story (5.40) from Josephus' *War* 6.201–13, where a woman within a besieged Jerusalem kills, cooks, and eats her infant son in a bout of insanity, expands the earlier account dramatically (in both senses of that word).¹¹⁸ *De Excidio* depicts Titus' response to that event at much greater length than Josephus. Book 5 ends, significantly, in the quiet aftermath of the mass suicide atop Masada, as the one adult survivor (a woman with five sons) informs the Romans of what has just taken place. The Jewish people have effectively disappeared from history by the end of *De Excidio*.

¹¹⁷ *De Excidio* 5.1.1 (CSEL 66.1: 293).

¹¹⁸ See Bay 2022.

Overall, *De Excidio* tells the story of the fateful Jewish encounter with Rome, beginning with the national uprising under Antiochus IV Epiphanes and ending with a Judea and Jerusalem crushed under the mighty heel of the Roman Empire. The author understood his history to be a “modern Jewish history”; that is, a post-biblical history of the Jews. He also understood his work as covering the *end* of Jewish history in any meaningful sense. One of the major contributions of Bell’s work was to show that the primary objective of *De Excidio* is to show that the *excidium* (destruction) of Jerusalem in 70 CE was the *supremum excidium*, the *final destruction* of the Jews.¹¹⁹ This is to say that Ps-Hegesippus “writes the Jews out of history.”¹²⁰ At various junctures, he explains why this happened: divine punishment for killing and rejecting Jesus. The long history of the Jews in *De Excidio*’s narrative comes to a decisive end in 70 CE (the Masada narrative of 73/74 CE is basically an afterthought). His history of the Jews does not extend even, as it might have, to the well-known Jewish uprisings of 115–117 CE (in Alexandria, Cyprus, and Cyrenaica) or the Bar Kochba revolt of 132–135 CE (in Judea).¹²¹ In the historical universe *De Excidio* creates, the Jews cease to exist in 70 CE. Its narrative is the story of how and why that came to pass.

RECEPTION AND INFLUENCE

From the very beginning, *De Excidio* seems to have been a popular and influential text. Such popularity and influence would not abate between late antiquity and the Middle Ages, as Richard Pollard has shown.¹²² Ps-Hegesippus had a lasting impact. Its medieval reception was considerable. It is not unreasonable to credit Ps-Hegesippus with certain ideological notions whose perennial appeal may still be recognized within contemporary religious thought.

¹¹⁹ Bell 1977, 52, and 1987, 352–54: “Like the monographs of Sallust, whose influence on pseudo-Hegesippus’ vocabulary and style is strong, the *De Excidio* has a coherent, though more expansive, theme: the destruction of Jerusalem, its causes and implications.”

¹²⁰ Bay 2021c.

¹²¹ Various Christian authors used 70 CE and/or the Bar Kochba revolt (132–135 CE) to talk about the end of Jewish history vis-à-vis the crucifixion of Jesus by the Jews, including Justin Martyr (also Eusebius in his *Chronicon*): Clements 2012; Irshai 2012, 820.

¹²² This section is indebted to Pollard 2015. See also Pollard 2018; Schreckenberg 1992, 71ff; 1987; 1984; 1972, 56–58; 1968, 107, 144–45, 173, 214.

As already mentioned, the earliest obvious quotations of *De Excidio* come from Eucherius of Lyons circa 430 CE. It is possible that Augustine knew *De Excidio*, but this is far from clear.¹²³ An excerpt from *De Excidio* 3.26 appears as a gloss in the fourth- to sixth-century *Tractatus in Lucam* from Italy, perhaps the work of an Arian bishop.¹²⁴ Two early- ninth-century manuscripts – Codex Sangallensis 626 (St. Gallen) and Codex Augiensis 82 (Karlsruhe) – apparently testify that a certain Cyprian, perhaps the bishop Cyprian of Toulon (r. 524–546), penned a new preface to the work.¹²⁵ Further, *De Excidio*’s version of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul (3.2) formed part of the basis for the late sixth-/early seventh-century *Passion of the Apostles Peter and Paul* (i.e., “Pseudo-Abdias”).¹²⁶ From early on, *De Excidio*’s impact was considerable, diverse, and diffuse.

Some of *De Excidio*’s utility for authors of late antiquity and the Byzantine/early medieval period seems to have been geographical and topographical, seems to have been geographical and topographical; but *De Excidio* was also important for medieval chronology, papal epistolography, and lexicography.¹²⁷ In addition to Eucherius, who sources *De Excidio* 3.6 for information about the Palestinian region of Samaria, and the *Tractatus in Lucam*, which borrows Ps-Hegesippus’ detailed description of the Sea of Galilee, we find the Irish abbot Adamnan of Iona in the seventh century using *De Excidio* as a geography sourcebook for his travel narrative of the French Bishop Arculf to the Holy Land (*On Sacred Places*, c. 680).¹²⁸ Adamnan’s description of Alexandria and the Nile (*De Locis Sanctis* 2.30) consists of verbatim quotations from *De Excidio* Book 4. Thereafter the Venerable Bede drew upon *De Excidio* in his rewrite of *On Sacred Places*¹²⁹ and elsewhere.¹³⁰ *De Excidio*’s third and fourth books appear particularly prominent early

¹²³ See Augustine *Ep.* 199 and his sermon *De Excidio Urbis Romae*; Pollard 2015, 86.

¹²⁴ Rönsch 1883.

¹²⁵ A library catalogue from 821–822 from the Reichenau Benediktinerkloster lists *De Excidio* (*Item euisdem de bello Judaico libri V excerpti de historia Josephi*) among the works of Bishop Cyprian; Lehmann 1969, 246.

¹²⁶ Eastman 2019, 130, 193–94.

¹²⁷ On *De Excidio* 3.26 and Holy Land cartography, see Van Duzer and Dines 2015, 198–200. Ussani 1941 explores Pseudo-Hegesippus’ use by medieval chroniclers, Pope Nicholas I in his ninety-ninth letter to the Bulgarians from 866, and some later medieval lexicographers. Thanks to Richard Pollard for pointing me to this article.

¹²⁸ Nestled within the monk’s later Latin vernacular, the prose of *De Excidio* is easily discernible (see, e.g., *De Locis Sanctis* 2.30.11 versus *De Excidio* 4.27.1); Gorman 2006, 36, lists quotes from Ps-Hegesippus in Adamnan’s *De Locis Sanctis*.

¹²⁹ Bede *De Locis Sanctis* 18.1–2 (= *De Excidio* 4.27) supplements Adamnan’s description of Alexandria’s harbor.

¹³⁰ See Lapidge 2005, 218.

on. *De Excidio* was, despite its polemical and theological content, often used for mining more mundane data. The reception of *De Excidio* in this regard mirrors that of Josephus, who had been a historical supplement to the Bible since the time of Origen at least. In fact, *De Excidio* was taken by some to be the work of Josephus at least until the mid-ninth century, when the name “Hegesippus” first emerges (in the manuscripts Karlsruhe LB Aug 101 and Bern BB 180). Eucherius and Bede both cite Josephus when quoting *De Excidio*. However, it is hard to imagine a literate reader reading *De Excidio* as coming directly (via translation) from Josephus’ hand, inasmuch as *De Excidio* explicitly differentiates itself from Josephus qua author (e.g., Prol. 1; 1.1.8; 2.12.1), identifies itself as the original product of a late antique author (e.g., at 3.5.2), and betrays an explicitly Christian outlook (Prol. 1–3; 2.12.1–2; 3.2; 5.2; 5.32) and even an overtly Trinitarian theology (5.9.4).

I tend to think that early readers referred to *De Excidio* as the work of Josephus in much the same way as one might refer to the *Theystes* as a tragedy of Euripides even if reading Seneca’s much later, and rather different, Latin version. Certainly, later Christian readers of *De Excidio* understood that the work did not come straight from Josephus’ pen – everyone knew Josephus had written in Greek. The only question is at what level of remove from Josephus they understood *De Excidio* to stand: Was it for them a lightly annotated translation, or the work of another author entirely? Perhaps some glossed over it and assumed it was a translation of Josephus with a Christian preface or, having read a bit further, a translation with a Christian preface and a few well-placed Christian insertions (2.12; 3.2; 5.2; 5.9; 5.32). This is not unimaginable. Or maybe, in the absence of an author, there was simply no other way to call such a text, even if one recognized that *De Excidio* was not equivalent to Josephus’ *War*. If some scribes labeled *De Excidio* a Josephan text, no reader worth their salt could have read the text and thought: “Flavius Josephus wrote this.”

De Excidio’s significance also extended into medieval Spain, as already mentioned. Isidore of Seville, who seems not to have had access to the Latin *Antiquities* or Latin *War* proper, used *De Excidio* extensively. Books 9 through 20 of Isidore’s *Etymologies* cite Ps-Hegesippus for descriptions of military implements, ethnographic data, and, once again, geography. This means that *De Excidio* was an important source for one of the most influential books of the entire medieval era. *De Excidio* was known and cited not only for its strictly historical content, but also for its anti-Jewish perspective: Julian of Toledo (c. 642–690) used Ps-Hegesippus for both his own historiography (*The History of King Wamba’s Expedition*

against Paul, the Rebel Duke of Narbonne)¹³¹ and his anti-Jewish polemics (*Concerning the Approval of the Sixth Age against the Jews*).¹³² In the mid-ninth century Paul Alvaro of Cordoba drew upon *De Excidio* 5.31 to “prove” that even the Jews (i.e., Josephus) believed that the prophecy of seventy weeks from Daniel 9 presaged the advent of Christ and Jerusalem’s destruction. It also seems to have been in the ninth century that there appeared a work composed almost completely of block quotes of what might be called Ps-Hegesippus’ core anti-Jewish passages. This work appears among the spurious works of Ambrose in Migne’s *Patrologia Latina*, and thus has been called “Pseudo-Ambrose” or the *Anacephalaeosis*; its fuller title has been given as *Historiae de excidio Hierosolymitanæ Urbis Anacephalaeosis*, but the manuscripts introduce this text as *Recapitulatio desolationis hierosolimæ, secundum egesippum christianissimum*.¹³³

This text, the *Anacephalaeosis* or *Recapitulatio* (the former is an odd Greek neologism of the latter), actually comes close to counting as part of *De Excidio*’s transmission history rather than its reception history. The text almost completely and almost verbatim reproduces *De Excidio* 5.2 – a long discourse directed at Jerusalem/the Jews and perhaps the most integral and representative passage of the work – alongside several other “greatest hits” of Ps-Hegesippus’ anti-Jewish content.¹³⁴ All of this is packaged into what Amnon Lindner has convincingly argued is a ninth-century Carolingian Easter sermon,¹³⁵ which, interestingly enough, betrays a clear kinship to an important and idiosyncratic ninth-century manuscript of *De Excidio*: Bern Burgerbibliothek 180. A striking feature of the *Recapitulatio* is the anti-Jewish tailoring it applies to the already heavily anti-Jewish discourse of *De Excidio* 5.2. For example, it lacks the vocative *ciuitas* (“o city!”) in the opening line of *De*

¹³¹ I.e. *Historia de Wambæ Regis Gothorum Toletani Expeditione*.

¹³² I.e. *De Comprobatione Aetatis Sextæ contra Judæos*.

¹³³ “Summary of the Desolation of Jerusalem, according to the most Christian Hegesippus.” This is the title given in the earliest manuscript witness to this text (Orléans 163, f. 189).

¹³⁴ Lindner 1992, 149, records the contents of *Recapitulatio* as, in this order: *De Excidio* 5.1, 5.2, 2.12, 5.49, 5.9, 5.43–44, 5.53, in addition to a few portions whose source is unidentified (plus one passage drawing upon the Gospel of Nicodemus and the apocryphal letter of Pontius Pilate to Claudius preserved in several versions of the Apocryphal Acts of Peter, in both Greek and Latin). A fuller study is needed.

¹³⁵ Lindner 1992; 1989. Lindner 1992, 145n1, mentions a forthcoming critical edition in Brepols’ Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis (CCCM) series, which to my knowledge has never appeared.

Excidio 5.2 – *Quomodo decepta es* [, *ciuitas*,] *populis tuis* – which implies that the author/speaker is speaking not so much to the city of Jerusalem but to the Jews as such.¹³⁶ This impression is strengthened by how the *Recapitulatio* changes the final line of the address: Where *De Excidio* 5.2.2 ends with “But let us come to the beginning of the destruction of Jerusalem,” the same line in the *Recapitulatio* reads: “But let us come to the completion of the destruction of Jerusalem *and to the purging of the Jews*” (emphasis mine).¹³⁷ In general, the *Recapitulatio* uses selected *De Excidio* passages to correlate the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews more closely to the rejection, betrayal, and crucifixion of Jesus, all delivered as an ostensibly uplifting festival-day homily. The *Recapitulatio* exists in five manuscripts:

Orléans BM 163 (140), ff. 189–193 (11th century, Fleury)
 Paris BnF Lat 13333 I, ff. 45v–56 (12th century)
 Semur-en-Auxois BM 15, ff. 71v–86v (12th century)
 Paris BnF Lat 2343, ff. 156–160v (late 12th century)
 Bruges OB 22, ff. 161v–168v (13th century)

It is worth noting that, in addition, the *Recapitulatio* not only appears alongside *De Excidio* within Ambrose’s *Spuria* in Migne’s *Patrologia Latina*, it also appears alongside *De Excidio* in the shared, early sixteenth-century *editio princeps* of both works, and in subsequent printings.¹³⁸

The *Recapitulatio* was not unique, as we saw earlier. Like breeds like, and many medieval and early modern accounts of Jerusalem’s destruction draw from *De Excidio*.¹³⁹ In the interim between Julian of Toledo and these ninth-century works, Ps-Hegesippus’ *Quo Vadis* story (*De Excidio* 3.2, the *Passio Petri et Pauli*) was picked up in the eighth century

¹³⁶ This is the effect of the *Recapitulatio*’s rendering, that is, though it seems likely to have been unintentional: Bern 180 (f. 107r) has “*ciuitas*” superscripted after “*decepta es*,” in the same or a similar hand but no doubt after the penning of the initial line. The author of the *Recapitulatio* either used this manuscript as his source before the superscripted correction, or simply chose to ignore the superscript, possibly using the opportunity afforded by the codicological accident to make a convenient and ideologically motivated decision for omission, or sourced the same earlier text that was the basis for Bern 180, which lacked *ciuitas*, and only Bern 180’s scribe emended the omission post facto.

¹³⁷ *De Excidio* 5.2: *Sed ueniamus ad exordia obsidionis Hierusalem versus the Recapitulatio: Sed ueniamus ad summam euersionis hierusalem et ad deiectionem iudeorum* (Orléans 163, f. 190).

¹³⁸ Lindner 1992, 145–47. Cf. PL 15: 2205–18.

¹³⁹ Especially in espousing an “anti-Jewish” interpretation that saw the event as the result of the Jewish rejection of Jesus and thus deserved divine chastisement: Groves 2015, 36; Kletter 2013, 91–115; Wright 1989, 21–24.

by Beatus of Liebana (d. c. 800) and Heterius of Osma. *De Excidio* was a sourcebook for geographical, historical, military, anti-Jewish, and legendary Christian material, much loved and oft cited.

Beyond the works and authors already listed, and based only on our incomplete state of current knowledge,¹⁴⁰ *De Excidio*'s influence may be traced through Defensor of Ligugé's moralistic florilegium known as the *Book of Sparks* (*Liber Scintillarum*; c. 700); the anti-Jewish *Vengeance of the Savior* (*Vindicta Salvatoris*; c. 700);¹⁴¹ the eighth- or ninth-century *abecedarius* poem entitled *Arve Poli Conditorem*, recounting Titus' and Vespasian's revenge upon Jerusalem and the Jews for denying and murdering Jesus Christ; Frechulf of Lisieux's twelve-book *Chronicle* from the 820s covering creation to the early seventh century, incorporating large portions of *De Excidio*;¹⁴² Hrabanus Maurus' (d. 856) *Commentary on Maccabees* (830s);¹⁴³ the conciliar letter resulting from the Council of Aachen (836 CE), composed by Jonas of Orleans (d. 843); the ninth-century biblical interpreter Angelomus of Luxeuil's *Commentary on Genesis* and *Exposition on the Song of Songs* (sourcing *De Excidio* second or third hand via Hrabanus, Bede, and/or Isidore); and possibly Walafrid Strabo's *On the Overthrow of Jerusalem* (*De Subversione Hierusalem*) from 824. This list could be supplemented by many, many other texts and writers that used *De Excidio* from the ninth century onward. As a final mention: *De Excidio* is the most important and extensively used source of an early tenth-century Hebrew work called *Sefer Yosippon*, itself probably the most important (and one of the earliest) instances of medieval Jewish historiography.¹⁴⁴ And while *Yosippon*, which came to be translated into numerous languages over the next millennium, directly contradicted *De Excidio*'s perspective on Jewish history, this only confirms the impact Ps-Hegesippus had on subsequent literature and the importance that later authors, Christian and Jewish, afforded to *De Excidio* as a historical work.

De Excidio was a wildly popular text in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.¹⁴⁵ Ps-Hegesippus provided various kinds of information

¹⁴⁰ Again, see Pollard 2015 for all the following sources.

¹⁴¹ Urlacher-Becht and Gounelle 2020.

¹⁴² The largest block quotes of *De Excidio* come in Frechulf, then Adamnan (excluding the *Anacephalosis*), according to Pollard 2018, 29.

¹⁴³ Hrabanus *In Macc.* 1.16 quotes *De Excidio* 1.10.3–11.1 and 1.15.21–16.8.

¹⁴⁴ Nisse 2017, 13–46. See generally the bibliography in Bay 2022.

¹⁴⁵ See Wright 2009, who problematically calls *De Excidio* a “translation” of Josephus and assumes uncritically that the work is that of a Jewish convert to Christianity.

and perspective that later authors found useful. *De Excidio* became a medieval fountainhead of anti-Jewish and anti-heretical polemic, supersessionist Christian theology, geography and travel writing, military historiography, ethnography, apocryphal apostolic narrative, encyclopedic etymology, and even “moral-theological/legal prescription” (Jonas of Orleans’ conciliar letter). The upshot of this brief survey is this: *De Excidio* was *very* influential. To say that *De Excidio* was one of the most important works of Christian late antiquity and (therefore) the Middle Ages is not an exaggeration. It is a fact. The reception and influence of *De Excidio*, which scholars have only begun to appreciate, bear this out. When we examine *De Excidio*, we may be approaching a text that modern scholarship has all but forgotten; but it is a work whose pre-modern impact was substantial.

SOURCES AND PARALLELS

Ps-Hegesippus used and cited many different texts. And he did so in many different ways. Even a halfway comprehensive study of this subject would be enormous and unwieldy. Here I want only to make a few brief, but crucial, points.

First, it must be appreciated that, while Josephus’ *Jewish War* is *De Excidio*’s most extensive source (by far), it is far from its only one. Ps-Hegesippus also knew Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* and used it in places to add or fill in portions of his narrative not recorded in the *War* (e.g., *De Excidio* 1.38.1–2; 2.4.1–5.1; 2.12.1–13.3; 2.13.6–8). At the same time, Ps-Hegesippus drew upon apocryphal acts traditions (3.2). He used classical literature, especially Vergil, Sallust, and Horace, but also, as examples, Cicero, Pliny, and Tacitus, though here it should be noted that there is a fine line between source and literary influence: Ps-Hegesippus’ “Vergilianisms” and classical turns of phrase are often simply the product of an elite education, during which he will have internalized the language of canonical authors. Similarly, turns of phrase from Shakespeare appear in modern English authors, even those who may never have read him (e.g., when one references a “wild goose chase”). However, given the aesthetic, style-conscious tenor of Ps-Hegesippus’ Latin prose, one should not place a hermetic seal between his “historical” and “literary” sources.

While Ps-Hegesippus often takes lexical and stylistic cues from his classical sources, *De Excidio*’s most important sources of historical information include texts from the biblical tradition. Ps-Hegesippus thought

and communicated in largely biblical terms. Not just when remembering ancient history, but also when expressing ideas, Ps-Hegesippus communicates in the language of Scripture, as when he puts periphrastic renderings of Rom 7:24 and Phil 1:21 into the mouth of the historical actor Josephus (!) in a speech at *De Excidio* 3.16.1. Ps-Hegesippus knew his Bible (in Greek) at least as well as his Classics. Thus, when at *De Excidio* 5.9.1–4 he recounts a brief history and description of the Jerusalem Temple, Ps-Hegesippus draws comfortably on a store of biblical knowledge to rewrite, and correct theologically, the Temple description found in Josephus' *Jewish War*. What the reader of *De Excidio* must appreciate, then, is the *range* of Ps-Hegesippus' literary knowledge. One reason Ps-Hegesippus was able to mold his own (hi)story out of Josephan clay was that he had a veritable arsenal of other literary tools at his disposal.

DE EXCIDIO AND FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS' JEWISH WAR

De Excidio's relationship to its primary source, Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War*, stands somewhere between literal translation and completely independent work. This has led scholars to attribute to *De Excidio* a number of different labels vis-à-vis Josephus' *War*, including (listed alphabetically) "abridgment," "adaptation," "condensation," "distortion," "loose translation," "(free) paraphrase," "perversion," "recasting," "recension," "rendition," "revision," "reworking" (*Bearbeitung*), and occasionally simply "translation." Albert Bell noted that most scholars before him had considered *De Excidio* an "inept Latin translation of Josephus' *Jewish War*."¹⁴⁶ But whatever one calls it, *De Excidio* is something of a *bricolage*.

De Excidio and Josephus' *Jewish War* may not be apples and oranges, as it were, but they are definitely two very different kinds of apples. It is easy to miss this, however, when brief introductions to *De Excidio* circulate the generality that Books 1–4 of *De Excidio* effectively correspond to Books 1–4 of *War*, while Book 5 of *De Excidio* condenses Books 5–7 of *War*. Though it is true that the structure and contents of *De Excidio* may be heuristically represented by these basic equivalencies, taking them as a roadmap by which to understand *De Excidio* is misleading in the extreme. Despite close reliance upon its Greek source, *De Excidio* is an independent literary work, to be read on its own terms. One method of showing this is textual statistics.

¹⁴⁶ Bell 1977, abstract.

A statistical-linguistic comparison between *De Excidio* and Josephus' *War* pits Latin against Greek, two languages of rather different syntactic economies; the lack of a definite article in Latin alone guarantees a significantly different word count compared to an equivalent Greek text. Still, a fruitful way of comparing *War* and *De Excidio* is via the "sections" of the Greek text of *War* invented by Benedict Niese in his critical edition of Josephus' works (see [Appendix 2](#)).¹⁴⁷ These sections appear in Ussani's critical apparatus to *De Excidio*. The sections range from one sentence to several paragraphs. In the Greek text of *War* they average about thirty-one words per section, as can be seen in [Table 1.1](#). The table shows book by book the section counts and word counts of both *Jewish War* and *De Excidio* (based on Ussani's apparatus).¹⁴⁸

Even adjusting for linguistic variation between Greek and Latin, [Table 1.1](#) shows that *De Excidio* is a moderately shorter text than *War*.¹⁴⁹ Incidentally, it also evinces a great deal of balance, with both the first and last books taking up about a third of the work's total space, and the remaining third dispersed remarkably evenly across the three middle books (perhaps one thing Ps-Hegesippus had in mind in rewriting Josephus' *War* was to create a text of greater structural balance).¹⁵⁰

The data show that Ps-Hegesippus did not just paraphrase Books 1–4 of *War* and then radically change Books 5–7.¹⁵¹ Rather, *De Excidio* systematically curtails the narrative of *War*, omitting a significant number of sections from each of *War*'s seven books. Ps-Hegesippus omits the least number of sections from *War*'s Books 1 and 6, but even from these he cuts 106 and 83 sections, respectively (16 and 19 percent of each book). Anywhere between one-quarter and three-quarters of the other

¹⁴⁷ See [Bell 1977](#), 228–40, for a full comparative chart.

¹⁴⁸ These references do not imply that a given section of *War* is fully or exactly represented in *De Excidio*. Rather, the purpose of [Table 1.1](#) is simply to show which sections of *War* are reflected at all, in any way, in *De Excidio*.

¹⁴⁹ By way of contrast, the Latin translation of the *Jewish War* retains a word count per book nearly identical to Josephus' Greek: Book 1 ≈ 29,000 words; Book 2 ≈ 22,500; Book 3 ≈ 13,500 words; Book 4 ≈ 16,500; Book 5 ≈ 15,500; Book 6 ≈ 11,500; Book 7 ≈ 11,250. The Latin *War*, in other words, has a very similar word count to the Greek *War* (≈ 119,750 words compared to 125,594), and a similar word count ratio between books (like the Greek *War*, the books, longest to shortest, are 1–2–4–5–3–6–7). See similar statistics for *War* in [Mason 2016b](#), 18 (19–20 for a narrative summary of *War*, 13 for a comment on Ps-Hegesippus' use of *War*).

¹⁵⁰ A similar analysis with somewhat different conclusions appears in [Stover and Woudhuysen 2022](#), who note an "imbalance" in *De Excidio*'s book sizes (11) as part of an argument that its structure mirrors Sallust in important ways.

¹⁵¹ Contra [Estève 1987](#), XII.

TABLE 1.1 *Comparative word counts: Jewish War and De Excidio*

<i>Jewish War</i>	Word Count	Niese Sections	<i>De Excidio</i>	Word Count	Niese Sections*
Book 1	29,756	673	Book 1	26,075	567
Book 2	22,520	654	Book 2	11,029	336
Book 3	14,247	542	Book 3	12,116	365
Book 4	17,624	663	Book 4	11,060	501
Book 5	16,675	572			371
Book 6	12,462	442	Book 5	27,081	359
Book 7	12,310	455			128
TOTALS	125,594	4,001		87,361	2,607

*Column 6 records the Niese sections of Josephus’ *War* that are reflected in the respective books of *De Excidio*. The sections of Books 5–7 of *War* reflect sections retained in Book 5 of *De Excidio*. (Niese sections from any book of *War* contained in, e.g., *De Excidio* Book 1 are counted for the latter.)

five books of *War* are axed by Ps-Hegesippus in the process of paraphrase.¹⁵² *De Excidio* omits completely some of the longest and most important sections of *War*. An example is Ps-Hegesippus’ excision of Josephus’ famous, extended description of the three Jewish sects or “philosophies” (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes) in *War* 2.119–66. He also omits the short section of *War* 3.399–408 where Josephus records his own prophecy to Vespasian that he and his son Titus would be emperors. In addition to all of this, we may note that Ps-Hegesippus places 207 sections of Josephus’ *War* partially or wholly out of their original order.¹⁵³ *De Excidio* not only chops but also reorients Josephus’ narrative. The picture this paints of *De Excidio* is not of a work based mostly upon Josephus’ *War* except in a few sections; rather, it portrays a work whose

¹⁵² Ps-Hegesippus omits a number (and percentage) of sections from each Book of Josephus’ *War*: Book 1 – 106 (16 percent); Book 2 – 318 (49 percent); Book 3 – 177 (33 percent); Book 4 – 162 (24 percent); Book 5 – 201 (35 percent); Book 6 – 83 (19 percent); Book 7 – 327 (72 percent).

¹⁵³ In other words, Ps-Hegesippus reorders 5 percent of the material he adopts from Josephus (on a conservative estimate) in addition to what he omits, adds, and changes in content. The number of sections per Book of *War* that Ps-Hegesippus places out of Josephan order are as follows: Book 1 – 25 (4 percent); Book 2 – 33 (5 percent); Book 3 – 3 (0.5 percent); Book 4 – 23 (3.5 percent); Book 5 – 15 (2.6 percent); Book 6 – 19 (4.3 percent); Book 7 – 89 (19.5 percent). Note that Ps-Hegesippus rearranges almost nothing from Book 3 of *War*, yet almost a fifth of what he adopts from Book 7. Cf. Appendix 2.

radical reconfiguration of its main source results in a drastically different final product. Ps-Hegesippus is not Josephus.

It is not only that Ps-Hegesippus omits almost a third of Josephus' *War* (measured by Niese sections) and rearranges much of the material he does keep. We also find a great deal in *De Excidio* that appears nowhere in the *Jewish War*. In addition to entire chapters taken from the *Jewish Antiquities*, mentioned above, other chapters have no Josephan parallel whatsoever (1.3.1; 3.2.1; 4.5.1; 5.1.1). Still other sections contain material that has parallels in *War* but prefer another source to *War*. For example, *De Excidio* 1.1.1–3 use 1 Maccabees in preference to *War*. This in addition to passages in *De Excidio* that expand considerably upon the *War*, sometimes resulting in a passage (especially in speeches) several times longer than its Greek source text. The most prominent examples of this come at *De Excidio* 5.2.1 and 5.22.1, both of which create extensive speeches that in *War* either barely show up (5.2.1–2 = *War* 5.19–20) or appear nowhere at all (5.22.1). The upshot of all of this is that there are more than a few passages in *De Excidio* that are hardly recognizable as Josephan. Others are a patchwork of Josephan tidbits. Consider, for example, *De Excidio* 2.1.2, which contains the following amalgam of *Jewish War* Book 2 (by section, as they appear in *De Excidio*): 80–81, 26–28, 2, 31–32, 30, 90–91; or mark the mash-ups effected by *De Excidio* 5.43.1 (= *War* 6.266, 261, 265, 271, 280, 260) and 5.49.4 (= *War* 6.435, 429, 420–21, 7.37–40). And such mixtures are far from isolated incidents (see again [Appendix 2](#)). To a certain extent, therefore, to read *De Excidio* against the backdrop of *War* is indeed akin to reading Livy against the backdrop of Polybius: The languages are different and, while the narrative overlap is obvious, reading one as a version of the other does justice to neither.

That sketches a broad outline for conceptualizing the relationship of *De Excidio* to Josephus' *Jewish War*. A more inductive demonstration may also help. A few studies have already demonstrated how certain passages of *De Excidio* differ from their Josephan versions: Duncan MacRae's examination of *De Excidio* 2.4 shows how Ps-Hegesippus adapts a passage from the *Jewish Antiquities* 18.65–80 to a late antique aristocratic context.¹⁵⁴ I have shown how the Egyptian pseudo-prophet episode of *De Excidio* 2.7 (= *War* 2.261–63; cf. *Antiquities* 20.169–72) condenses and improves upon its source, thus differing dramatically from the late antique Latin translations of that passage by Rufinus of Aquileia

¹⁵⁴ MacRae 2021.

and the anonymous Latin translator of Josephus' *War*.¹⁵⁵ In other words, scholarship comparing *De Excidio* with Josephus' *War* has already highlighted major differences between the two. Yet understanding this relationship is critical for the present study. Therefore an illustration of the differences is in order.

The following story recounts how Aristobulus I, the fifth Hasmonean priest to rule in Judea (104–103 BCE), after having his brother Antigonus killed on suspicion of plotting against his life, suffered physiological and supernatural ailments as a result. Here I compare the story as told in the Latin translation of Josephus' *Jewish War* to *De Excidio*'s version. The Latin *War* reads:

But sure enough, the sickness immediately increased due to Aristobulus' repentance for his crime and, continually disturbed at the thought of his deed, he dwindled away, disturbed in spirit. At length, in the bitterness of sorrow after his insides had become all torn up, he suddenly spewed up blood. Hereupon, one of the servants assigned to his service, while carrying [the blood] outside, lost his footing due to some divine arrangement and, on the place where Antigonus had been killed, he poured out the blood of the killer upon the stains of the one previously slain. Then there erupted an immediate wail among those who had seen the boy pour out the blood as though on purpose. The clamor made its way to the king's ears, and he inquired as to its cause; and when no one dared to give him an answer, he became passionate in seeking further to find out what happened. Eventually they related what had really happened to him, as he had been menacing and threatening violence. But he filled his eyes with tears and wailed as much as he was able. He spoke thus: "Of a truth it was not to be hoped that my nefarious deeds would remain concealed from God's greatest light, for vengeful Justice pursues me swiftly over my slain kinsman. How long, o vile body, will you hold back my damned soul from brother and mother? For how long will I pour out my blood to them a little at a time? Let them take it all at once, lest Fortune now mock at the sacrifices of my innards to the dead." Having said these things, he died on the spot, when he had reigned no more than a year.

At uero Aristobulo confestim sceleris paenitudine morbus ingrauescit semperque facinoris cogitatione sollicitus perturbato animo tabescebat, donec maeroris acerbitate uisceribus laceratis subito sanguinem uomere. Hunc autem unus e seruulis eius ministerio destinatis foras efferens prouidentia diuinitatis errauit, et ubi Antigonus erat occisus, super extantes adhuc caedis maculas cruorem interfectoris effudit. Vlulatu autem continuo sublato, qui puerum tanquam de industria sanguinem libasse conspexerant, clamor ad regis aures peruenit, causamque requirebat, et cum eam prodere nullus auderet, ad resciscendum magis ardebat. Ad extremum autem minitanti uimque adhibenti uerum quod erat indicauerunt.

¹⁵⁵ Bay 2021a; cf. Bay 2022 for *De Excidio* 5.40 and parallels.

Atque ille cum lacrimis opplesset oculos quantumque poterat ingemisset, haec dixit: 'Sperandum certe non erat, ut maximum dei lumen facta mea nefaria lat-erent, nam cito me ultrix cognatae caedis iustitia persequitur. Quatenus, o corpus improbum, fratri matrique damnatam animam detenebis? Quam diu paulatim libabo illis sanguinem meum? Simul totum accipiant neque iam meorum uiscerum inferias fortuna derideat.' His dictis ilico moritur, cum non plus anno regnasset.

Josephus (Latin) *Jewish War* 1.81–84¹⁵⁶

Compare this to the much longer and somewhat different version of *De Excidio*:

And so, due to this excessive remorse, the potency of the disease burst forth, so that his entrails were rent and he threw up blood in vomit coming from his mouth. This [vomit] a courier boy who was discharging his duties concerning the king's needs carried outside; and he was ignorant of what had been done, because it was done by chance rather than on purpose, and he came to that spot at which Antigonus had been dispatched. In that place, upon the still-glistening stain of his brother's blood he poured out the blood of his murderer. All of a sudden a cry erupted, and groaning, among the spectators, because due to some profound arrangement of the Lord the blood of a most wicked parricide was seen to be poured out upon that of the slain. Frightened by the sound, Aristobulus inquired after its cause. When this question met with silence, he pressed for an answer with zealous questioning and indignant gestures. When this answer was given, his eyes filled with tears and, with as much strength as was in him, he groaned, while saying: "Fitting payback has returned upon me as I deserve. For I was not able, mechanic of such an impious crime, to escape the eye of God! For it is time for swift retribution and I am accosted with the fitting price of my own parricide. Be strong, body. How long will you delay my condemned soul from my mother and brother? Why do I pour out my blood to them piecemeal? If there is any piety, let all hands hurl darts against me, let all brothers and siblings transfix me with the sword in vengeance of piety. Let the victim of parricide be sacrificed, and let him be burned for his violated relative, let my guilty flesh vomit up all of its blood all at once. Let the daemon which pushed me into such nefarious hazards of savage crime not be satisfied by the tortures and slow decay of my innards." With these words he put an end to his rule and his life, having administered the royal power for barely a year, since he had not fled from parricide.

Itaque immoderata maestitudine eo prorupit morbi uis, ut conuulsis uisceribus sanguinem uomitu oris reiecerit. Quem puer aulicus regis usibus exhibens ministerium foras extulit atque imprudens facti, quod casu potius quam industria gerebatur, ad eum locum peruenit, in quo Antigonus fuerat extinctus. Illic supra rorantes adhuc fraterni sanguinis maculas percussoris sanguinem effudit. Clamor subito factus et gemitus intuentium eo, quod profunda quadam dispositione domini libatus peremto scelestissimi parricidae sanguis uideretur. Sono excitus

¹⁵⁶ Latin from Bader 2019, 65. Translation mine.

causam quaesiuit; cum sileretur, elicuit studio quaerendi et motu indignationis. Cuius accepto indicio suffusus oculos lacrimis et quantum erat in eo uirtutis ingemescens ait: 'Rependitur meritis meis congrua uicissitudo. Neque enim dei oculum tam impii machinator sceleris praeterire poteram. Matura flagitio ultio subest et digno iam conuenior parricidii mei pretio. Vale, corpus. Quousque animam fratri matrique condemnatam detines? Quid per partes eis libo meum sanguinem? In me omnes, si qua est pietas, contorqueant manus spicula, me omnes filii germanique ultore pietatis gladio transfigant. Mactetur hostia parricidalis atque immoletur uiolatae necessitudini, totum simul caro noxia sanguinem euomat. Non uiscerum meorum cruciatibus et lenta tunc daemonium exsaturetur, quod me in tam nefarios ausus saeui facinoris impegi'. His dictis finem imperio uitaeque dedit uix anno functus potestate regia, propter quam parricidium non refugerat.

De Excidio 1.8.1¹⁵⁷

Ps-Hegesippus' version, a full third longer than the Latin translation, is far less beholden to the Greek. In places Ps-Hegesippus does translate Josephus' Greek straight up.¹⁵⁸ But elsewhere *De Excidio* provides a new story, departing from the Josephan original via paraphrase or the provision of new details. Some of these new details are aesthetic, as when the cry (οἰμωγή) that goes up (in Josephus) among the people who see the blood spilt becomes a cry (*clamor*) and a groan (*gemitus*) in Ps-Hegesippus. *De Excidio*'s literariness also drives the response to Aristobulus when he asks what is happening: in *War*, we read that "no one ventured to tell him;" in *De Excidio*, "his question was met with silence." Ps-Hegesippus sometimes improved aesthetically upon Josephus' prose.

Also significant here is what Ps-Hegesippus omits: In Josephus' account, the spectators cry because they believe the servant boy spilled the blood on purpose, though the reader knows that "daemonic foresight" has caused the event. In *De Excidio*, the narrative actors cry because some "profound arrangement of the Lord" had ostensibly orchestrated the kerfuffle. They, like the reader, know the score already. Key themes in the passage remain in common between Ps-Hegesippus and Josephus – for example, the mention of the "eye of God" and the "demon" who is

¹⁵⁷ CSEL 66.1: 12. Cf. Josephus *Antiquities* 3.314ff.

¹⁵⁸ Examples of direct translation include: the genitive absolute τῶν σπλάγχων ... σπαρattoμένων becomes the ablative absolute *conuulsis uisceribus*; Aristobulus "inquires after the cause" (τὴν αἰτίαν ἐπυνθάνετο/*causam quaesiuit*) of the commotion in both accounts. Examples of syntactical departures that nevertheless do not radically change the passage include the first sentence: in *War* Aristobulus' malady (νόσος) is the object of the verb "to aggravate" (ἐνσκήπτω), whereas in *De Excidio* Aristobulus' malady – rather, "the strength of the malady" (*uis morbi*) – is the subject of the verb *prorumpo* ("to burst forth").

said to be torturing Aristobulus – but even these appear in new syntactical and conceptual contexts in *De Excidio*. Note, for instance, that the demon in *De Excidio* is not just imputed with “mocking,” as in Josephus, but is saddled with responsibility for Aristobulus’ crimes. (Incidentally, this is the only place where Ps-Hegesippus mentions demons, while demon language in the *War* is more widespread.)¹⁵⁹ All of this points to the conclusion that *De Excidio*, while undeniably based on *War* here and elsewhere, is very much its own narrative with its own account of events.

This example is typical of passages where *De Excidio* adheres closely to the *Jewish War*, and even here the differences are stark. Suffice it to say that, when we read *De Excidio*, we are not reading a Latin translation of Josephus. Not even close. This is an entirely different work. And nowhere is the difference more stark than in the two texts’ uses of biblical *exempla*. Josephus does refer to biblical figures as examples (ὑποδείγματα) in his *Jewish War*.¹⁶⁰ By my count, he mentions personalities from the Hebrew Bible by name a grand total of twenty-five times in the *War*. By contrast, Ps-Hegesippus names biblical figures no fewer than 136 times, over five times as frequently as Josephus in *War*. Moreover, 70 percent (37 of 53) of the individual biblical *exempla* in Ps-Hegesippus are never named in Josephus’ *War* at all. This variance is striking, and it is one reason to use biblical figures as a means by which to study *De Excidio* in its own right.

Methodologically, it is important to keep a close eye on Josephus’ text when approaching *De Excidio*: The *Jewish War* is a necessary comparandum for *De Excidio* and often explains and illuminates what Ps-Hegesippus is doing in particular passages. At the same time, it is crucial for the reader of *De Excidio* to approach that text on its own terms, as piece of late antique Christian historiography and not just a fourth-century Latin translation of a first-century Jewish history.

THE IMPLIED READER OF *DE EXCIDIO*

For whom was *De Excidio* written? *De Excidio* is not the only work from the fourth and fifth centuries written “on the destruction” of a particular

¹⁵⁹ Bay 2019b.

¹⁶⁰ Josephus *War* 1.374, 507; 2.208, 397; 6.103, 106. Josephus uses the term ὑπόδειγμα six times in *War*, though only ever in reference to one biblical figure (Jeconiah at 6.103 and 6.106). Interestingly, the term never appears in Josephus’ *Antiquities*, *Life*, or *Against Apion*. Conversely, the cognate term παράδειγμα appears almost exclusively in the *Antiquities*, the only exceptions being *War* 7.351 and *Against Apion* 1.208. Rengstorff 1973–1994, 3.285, 4.252.

city. The *Ephemeridos* of Dictys of Crete, a version of the fall of Troy, was translated into Latin in the fourth century, and that century may also have witnessed the writing of the Latin *De Excidio Troiae* ascribed to Dares of Phrygia,¹⁶¹ and the anonymous *Excidium Troiae*.¹⁶² In 410 CE Augustine wrote a sermon *De Excidio Urbis Romae*. Later, in the sixth century, the cleric St. Gildas penned *De Excidio Britonum*. All of this is to say that *De Excidio* resembles a certain subgenre familiar to readers and writers of late antiquity. In and around the fourth and fifth centuries authors were writing about the historical destructions of cities and the downfalls of peoples. Nor was this subject matter new in late antiquity: Since Homer and Herodotus at least, the Greco-Roman world had become used to the rise and fall of nations and cities as a common literary motif within historically oriented literature. And of course, laments over a fallen Jerusalem constitute a major biblical motif, comprising the entire Book of Lamentations. Ps-Hegesippus adapts both tropes to first-century Jerusalem and by proxy to the Jews, a people whose historical (mis)fortunes the fourth-century Christian reader would have been most keen to understand, and exploit. Christians had appropriated much of the Jews' culture and national past; therefore their explication will have constituted attractive historical knowledge. In one sense, then, *De Excidio* is a novel Christian take on an age-old trope designed, it would seem, for readers fluent in both the classical and the biblical worlds.

From another angle, *De Excidio* was written by and for cultural elites beholden to a significant education in grammar and rhetoric and literature.¹⁶³ The vocabulary and syntax of *De Excidio* are the stuff of erudition: As in antiquity, so today, Ps-Hegesippus' Latin takes effort to understand. At the same time, Ps-Hegesippus manifests the aesthetic tendencies of the leisure class: Via word-pictures, metaphors, analogies, parallelism, double entendre, repetition, formal patterning, synthesis, antithesis, and a host of other stylistic, rhetorical, and aesthetic mechanisms, *De Excidio*

¹⁶¹ Wood 2018, 36–37, 40.

¹⁶² Martínez 2018, 406.

¹⁶³ Watts 2015: “[w]hen students attended schools, they immersed themselves in a world of young people governed by a unique, seemingly timeless, set of ideals and codes of conduct that differed in significant ways from those of the wider world” (37, emphasis mine). While Watts is talking specifically about the fourth-century figures of Libanius, Themistius, Ausonius, and Praetextus, it might be noted that the use of culturally known/relevant *exempla* could serve as a bridge to this divide, inasmuch as such figures embodied values intelligible to and involving just about every class and social status (Langlands 2018, 129).

reveals itself as a text written for those who appreciate language and its skilled deployment. At some level, *De Excidio* was written for enjoyment.¹⁶⁴ At times, it exhibits what Michael Roberts called the “jeweled style,” a literary poetics of ornate detail and description corresponding to a literary aesthetics representative of late antiquity, usually associated with (fourth-/fifth-century) poetry.¹⁶⁵ Ps-Hegesippus wrote in part to a sophisticated readership.

Ps-Hegesippus’ sources also suggest that he had a particular readership in mind. On the one hand, *De Excidio* borrows Latinisms from Vergil, Horace, and other paragons of classical Latinity and adopts geographical descriptions from Tacitus.¹⁶⁶ *De Excidio*’s overall structure may constitute a mirroring of Sallustian historiography.¹⁶⁷ Ps-Hegesippus likely assumed at least some readers familiar with the canonical Latin works of the classical past. Simultaneously, however, from the very beginning of the work *De Excidio* imbues its text with allusions to and quotations from the Christian Scriptures, Old Testament and New. One might assume that these canonical corpora imply distinct readerships, but such an assumption becomes problematic in late antiquity. For there “literate Christian Romans read Virgil and Homer” and “at least some literate non-Christian Romans read the Bible.”¹⁶⁸

Taking Ps-Hegesippus’ biblicism along with the Christian themes that crop up unmistakably from time to time in the text (2.12; 3.2; 5.2; 5.32), it is impossible to imagine a reader unfamiliar with Christian thought appreciating *De Excidio* beyond the surface level. On the other hand, it is easy to imagine a Christian reader being extremely interested in the narrative *De Excidio* provides. The main reason Josephus was so popular among early Christians was that his *Jewish War* recounted a history that spanned the historical period that witnessed the lifetime of Jesus Christ and the birth of the early Church. He also provided an account of the Jews’ “punishment” for rejecting and crucifying Jesus, something that certain ancient Christian readers were eager to get their hands on.¹⁶⁹ Ps-Hegesippus went even further than Josephus, creating a new narrative trajectory that effectively wrote the Jews out of history,

¹⁶⁴ Ancient histories generally kept historical veracity *and* entertainment *and* moral instruction in mind.

¹⁶⁵ Roberts 1989. See, e.g., the Jerusalem Temple *ekphrasis* at *De Excidio* 5.9.1–4.

¹⁶⁶ Bloch 2002, 190–92; 2012, 380–83.

¹⁶⁷ Stover and Woudhuysen 2022.

¹⁶⁸ Chin 2008, 72.

¹⁶⁹ See, e.g., Isidore of Pelousion *Ep.* 1692, discussed in Kampianaki 2020, 290–91.

thereby scratching the itch of early Christian empire whereby the historical identity of the Jews as God's people presented a problem requiring resolution.¹⁷⁰ *De Excidio*'s solution is to imply that the Jews ceased to be an important historical people with the destruction of the Temple, thus effectively historicizing Jewish identity as something that once had been. Ps-Hegesippus renders Jewish identity pluperfect.

Ps-Hegesippus provided important material for late antique Christian ideology, historical theology, and self-understanding. For the Latin-reading Christian of late antiquity, well versed in both the Bible and the Classics and who felt some dilemma of identity vis-à-vis the Jews, *De Excidio* provided a welcome, entertaining, and intellectually important work.

THEMES, THEOLOGY, AND LANGUAGE

As military historiography, the overall impression *De Excidio* conveys is that of classical Latin history with its conventional themes and terms. This tradition focused a great deal on geography, topography, and movement, and such features define *De Excidio*. More distinctive is the ritual and religious argot of Ps-Hegesippus. *De Excidio*'s frequent use of *religio*, *fides*, *deuotio*, *pietas*, and related terms reflect to some extent a collision of classical and Christian concepts and terminology.¹⁷¹ Thus, Ps-Hegesippus uses *fides* to refer to Christian "faith" but also to the more traditional meaning of "trustworthiness, faithfulness" in the context of military treaties and diplomatic agreements (one sees both usages already in the Prologue). Ps-Hegesippus' worldview combined ideas of Roman military honor with those of Christian piety.

One thoroughly predictable aspect of *De Excidio* is its concentration upon Jewish thought and culture. Nowhere is this more apparent than in *De Excidio* 2.13 – another passage in which Josephus' works are adapted piecemeal and out of order – where Ps-Hegesippus expatiates upon the Jewish priesthood (cf. 2.12.3). He contends that it was by the first century completely illegitimate, having abandoned its connection to Israel's first high priest, Aaron. This chapter traverses many niceties of Judaism that betray knowledge not only of Josephus, but of Jewish tradition generally. At the same time, it illustrates Ps-Hegesippus' interest in Jewish culture from the standpoint of Christian polemic. Ps-Hegesippus

¹⁷⁰ Cf. early parts of Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.*; Bay 2021c.

¹⁷¹ Estève 1987, XVI–XIX; McCormick 1935; Dwyer 1931.

is not just some curious anthropologist, but a party invested in highlighting Jewish dissipation, vice, and illegitimacy. Just after his discussion of the Jewish priesthood, Ps-Hegesippus makes an intra-narrative comment that explains events of Jerusalem's destruction as reflecting God's plan to obliterate the Jewish race.¹⁷² Anti-Jewish ethical and historical perspective is *the* defining feature of *De Excidio*'s tone.¹⁷³ Revealed in both in-passing comments and passage-length pronouncements, Ps-Hegesippus aims unabashedly at delegitimizing Jewish claims to divine peoplehood by pointing to the inherent immorality, poor historical decision-making, and eventual divine damnation of the Jews.

Ps-Hegesippus also evinces an unmistakable interest in Roman history, and in the broader Mediterranean past. At times Ps-Hegesippus mentions quintessential Roman *exempla* (like Scipio, Mucius Scaevola, Cleolia, and Manlius Torquatus) and other famous figures like Alexander the Great and Hannibal. *De Excidio* contains several panegyrics and surveys of Roman history and dominion, most prominently in the lengthy praise contained in 2.9.1. And he is a big fan of both Pompey and Titus. Ps-Hegesippus is pro-Christian, pro-Roman, and anti-Jewish: All of these features shine through the work's thematic, narrative, and lexical contents.¹⁷⁴

The *kind* of Christian Ps-Hegesippus is less easy to assess, though he does (once) tip his hand as a Trinitarian when he refers to an "idea of the Trinity" (*cognitio Trinitatis*) having been present in the Jerusalem Temple's inner sanctuary (*De Excidio* 5.9.4). Otherwise, Ps-Hegesippus' brand of Christianity can only be guessed at vaguely by inference. He refers at length to Peter, and more briefly to Paul, as apostles and *doctores Christianorum* at 3.2.1, where he records their martyrdoms. He several times mentions the spread of Christianity in the face of both Roman

¹⁷² Describing how Cestius Gallus withdrew from besieging Jerusalem in 66 CE, *De Excidio* 2.15.5 reads (CSEL 66.1: 174–75): "But the will of God, as far as it can be perceived, delayed the imminent end of the war against the Jews, until the downfall could envelop a great many, and indeed almost all, of the Jewish race. God was waiting, as I see it, so that the whole wicked enormity of their crimes would increase until, by the accrual of impiety, it might equal the measure of their ultimate punishments" (*Sed aduersa, quantum intellegi datur, Iudaeis uoluntas dei imminentem belli exitum comperendinauit, donec conplures ac paene uniuersos Iudaicae gentis ruina inuolueret. Expectabatur, ut reor, ut in omne nefas scelerum enormitas cresceret et impietatis incremento supremorum adaequaret mensuram flagitiorum*). For precursors to this way of thinking, see Gen 15:16; Dan 8:23; Matt 23:32–35; 1 Thess 2:16.

¹⁷³ A brief and helpful survey appears in Mason 2003, 17–19.

¹⁷⁴ See Molinier-Arbo 2020.

and Jewish opposition and the guilt of Pilate and Herod in Jesus' death (2.5.2; 2.12.1–2). Ps-Hegesippus uses Gospel tradition to explain history (3.14.1), in particular the destruction of Jerusalem and demise of the Jews (5.44.1; cf. 5.32.1). More than once New Testament language subtly inserts itself into *De Excidio*'s prose or character speeches. All of this tells us that Ps-Hegesippus was a Christian, but little else. Labeling him further would be a tenuous proposition, and it would not necessarily add anything to our knowledge. Were one forced to guess, one could do worse than to call Ps-Hegesippus a run-of-the-mill Trinitarian, Roman Christian who had great respect for his Old and New Testaments – the former he interpreted historically and even prophetically, but rarely if ever allegorically.

Finally, the figures of the Old Testament are not a minor part of Ps-Hegesippus' narrative. These biblical heroes constitute an important element of Ps-Hegesippus' understanding of Jewish history. They appear at key moments through the entirety of *De Excidio*, from its Prologue to its final chapter. While Josephus mentions sixteen biblical figures by name in the *Jewish War*, Ps-Hegesippus names fifty-three. Over three times as many Hebrew heroes appear in *De Excidio* as in the *War*. In his fascination with biblical heroes, Ps-Hegesippus aligns with other Christian authors of late antiquity, for whom the personalities of the Bible were of paramount importance for understanding and negotiating every aspect of thought and action, whether individual or social.¹⁷⁵ That such figures loomed large in the late ancient Christian imagination can be seen in the fact that prominent works were dedicated to particular personalities among them, such as Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses* and Ambrose's *On Abraham*. However, Ps-Hegesippus' usage of biblical figures, and the aspects of their legacies he chooses to highlight, sets him apart from most other ancient Christian literature: *De Excidio* avoids most of the spiritual, allegorical, and overtly Christian aspects of these figures, preferring to present them in the more Roman manner of ancient, ancestral, national *exempla*.

DE EXCIDIO AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

This book argues that Old Testament *exempla* constituted a critical, generative resource for Ps-Hegesippus in writing Jewish history from a

¹⁷⁵ See Bay 2021d; Somenzi 2009, 61.

Christian perspective. This argument opens new vistas onto the literary and rhetorical practices of late ancient Christians. Several scholars have already noticed that *De Excidio* adopts the habits of classical historiography, using *exempla* in ways that reflect Roman practice.¹⁷⁶ Classical historiography and Roman exemplarity are important lenses through which to view *De Excidio*. Earlier scholars have said this; I seek to show it at length.

To this day scholars talk about the advent of Christian historiography in the fourth and fifth centuries as manifesting in a combination of church history (Christians writing about Christians) and world chronicle (Christians writing about everyone), with the occasional oddball work like Orosius' *Histories against the Pagans* or Augustine's *City of God* (Christians writing about Romans).¹⁷⁷ From Arnaldo Momigliano's influential essay written more than fifty years ago to William Adler's recent survey in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, this is the way in which scholars have tended to talk about the nascent industry of Christian history-writing in late antiquity.¹⁷⁸ Eusebius stands center stage in such scholarly reconstructions. What the present study shows is that Christians also participated in a classical model of historiography to an extent that is generally unappreciated.¹⁷⁹ This book demonstrates that by showcasing the characteristic features of classical historiography that appear in *De Excidio*, including character speeches, the use of classical themes, terms, categories, and the deployment of national *exempla*. Character speeches are not a normal feature of other forms of ancient Christian history-writing; as they appear in *De Excidio*, following Josephus' lead, they evince a vocabulary and tenor that parallel earlier Roman literature far more than Ps-Hegesippus' Christian peers. The present study should enhance and shift our understanding of what early Christian historiography could look like.

This claim is not to deny the many linguistic, thematic, and ideological features *De Excidio* shares with chronographers – from Julius Africanus through Eusebius to Jerome and beyond – and with church historians,

¹⁷⁶ Bowman 2010, 105; Somenzi 2009; Sehlmeier 2009, 196, 202–3, 219–21, 293n64; Estève 1987; Bell 1985; 1977, 78, 105–6, 131, 137, 152, 155, 173, 181, 188–89, 191, 193–94, 202, 206. More recently, see Bay 2021f.

¹⁷⁷ The place to start in studying late antique historiography is now Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof, 2020, I–LXXXI.

¹⁷⁸ Momigliano 1963; Adler 2008.

¹⁷⁹ Required reading on the background of this subject, with bibliography, is Van Nuffelen 2017.

from Eusebius to Gelasius, Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and so forth. Nor does it neglect the fact that many early Christian histories, from the genre of chronography to particular literary practices like embedding histories with letters, have demonstrably classical models.¹⁸⁰ But the fact is that Ps-Hegesippus, in writing in a classical style about Jews and military/state relations between Rome and Judea, wrote a kind of history with few if any parallels in ancient Christian literature. In the sixth century, Procopius of Gaza would produce somewhat similar historiography in his *Secret History* and *Wars*; but these histories are contemporary, not long past, and oriented toward the ingroup, not the outgroup. Moreover, Procopius was, compared to Ps-Hegesippus, “less Christian” in his historiography – he “seems not to have believed in divine providence” – and differently classical: His Thucydidean recourse to Fortune (τύχη) is a representative conceptual difference.¹⁸¹ Ps-Hegesippus never uses the term *Fortuna* (or *fatum*), and in general he draws more stylistically, and less fundamentally, on the Classics. Thus, while Ps-Hegesippus is like other Christian authors of late antiquity in drawing on classical conventions, he does this in a singular way. *De Excidio* reads like Roman historiography written by a Christian. Markus Sehlmeier is not wrong in suggesting that, in his use of *exempla*-laden speeches in particular, Ps-Hegesippus appears more Roman even than Josephus.¹⁸²

Now, it is true that before the fifth century one has relatively few exemplars against which to measure Christian historiography. But even accounting for later writings, *De Excidio* evinces a distinctively classical ring. In any event, and in the words of Albert Bell’s oft-cited yet never published dissertation: “Pseudo-Hegesippus writes in the classical historiographical fashion, and he seems to have been the first Christian to attempt to do so.”¹⁸³ What this means is that in order to understand *De Excidio* aright, one must look to the standards and conventions of classical histories. Never is this more important than when it comes to Ps-Hegesippus’ use of *exempla*.

DE EXCIDIO AND EXEMPLARITY

Through *De Excidio*, this study hopes to reveal something about exemplarity as a rhetorical practice among late ancient Christians. By using

¹⁸⁰ See Burgess and Kulikowski 2013; DeVore 2014.

¹⁸¹ Kaldellis 2004, 4, 165–75.

¹⁸² Sehlmeier 2009, 293n64.

¹⁸³ Bell 1977, abstract.

the heroes of the Hebrew Bible as he does, Ps-Hegesippus reflects a tradition of exemplarity in conversation with the distinctively Roman manifestation of that rhetorical practice.

While it is fair to ask whether *all* peoples of *all* times have not had figures who served as cultural role models, scholars have come to recognize a distinctly Roman iteration of this practice.¹⁸⁴ Roman exemplarity is often seen to be encapsulated in Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, a first-century work recording the feats of some 1,200 heroes of the past. Equally notable are the 1,341 *exempla* mentioned throughout Cicero's works, prominent in texts like the *Tusculan Disputations*.¹⁸⁵ Recently, Rebecca Langlands and Matthew Roller have distilled previous work on Roman exemplarity, emphasizing its historiographical/rhetorical and ethical/pedagogical aspects, respectively.¹⁸⁶ What they and others have shown is that, while the Roman discourse of *exempla* shifted over time and took on various forms and functions,¹⁸⁷ it had a constant and discernible core. One may identify its national focus, its pet virtues,¹⁸⁸ and its stock of known characters within literature produced throughout the Roman Republic and Empire.¹⁸⁹ What the present study shows regarding Roman exemplarity is not that Ps-Hegesippus does exactly what any given classical author does with *exempla*, but rather that the broader Roman cultural discourse of exemplarity provides an obvious and helpful frame against which to view Ps-Hegesippus' deployment of biblical heroes.

Ps-Hegesippus' major source, Josephus, also exhibited this cultural habit.¹⁹⁰ But Josephus was actually rather reserved in doing so, at least in a way that could reasonably be identified as exemplarity per se. While Josephus undeniably portrays biblical figures as heroic, idyllic role models in his *Jewish Antiquities*,¹⁹¹ this is not what I – or most scholars, I

¹⁸⁴ See Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1356a–b; Apsines' *Rhetoric* 6–7; Cicero's *De Inventione* 1.49; *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.62; Bell and Hansen 2008. This Roman discourse itself developed in conversation with the Greek tradition of the “exemplar” or “paradigm” (παράδειγμα): Price 1975; Lumpe 1966; Kornhardt 1936; Alewell 1913.

¹⁸⁵ Bücher 2006, 157.

¹⁸⁶ Langlands 2018; Roller 2018. See also Hölkeskamp 1996.

¹⁸⁷ Walter 2004 sees *exempla* as emerging among Roman aristocrats of the third century BCE as a kind of elite cultural semiotics, and many locate a fundamental shift in Roman exemplarity during the early Empire.

¹⁸⁸ Litchfield 1914.

¹⁸⁹ On constancy in change in Republican to Imperial Roman exemplarity, see Kraus 2005; on Roman culture as inclined toward an exemplary ethics, see Marrou 1982, 231–36.

¹⁹⁰ As is widely known, but see Petitfils 2016, 98–113, 139–40.

¹⁹¹ A classic study is Spilsbury 1998.

think – mean by exemplarity. Rather, as mentioned in the Introduction, exemplarity as I am using it refers to mentions or citations of persons or events in certain rhetorical contexts;¹⁹² in particular, *exempla* a la Romana are ancient, ancestral, national figures who are “brought forward” in time to “speak” to their inheritors or descendants through their historic, heroic, model behavior.¹⁹³ *Exempla* as such function out of their original narrative contexts, as the *ex* prefix in *exemplum* implies. This is what the biblical heroes in *De Excidio* do, most notably in the speeches of 3.16–17 and 5.15–16 (see [Chapters 8](#) and [9](#)), and this differs from full-scale national histories like Josephus’ *Antiquities*.

Even so, one might still be tempted to hypothesize that Ps-Hegesippus’ deployment of biblical *exempla* merely follows in the footsteps of his major source, Josephus’ *Jewish War*. But, as we have mentioned several times now, the difference between the intensity and extent of exemplarity in the two works is staggering. The large majority of the more than fifty biblical figures mentioned in *De Excidio* – Josephus names fewer than twenty – are never, ever mentioned in the *War*. Of those that are, more than half (ten of sixteen) are only mentioned once by Josephus.¹⁹⁴ In other words, Josephus usually does not even mention the biblical figures that appear in *De Excidio*; when he does, more often than not he only mentions them once. Consider the five most frequently mentioned biblical *exempla* in *De Excidio*: Aaron, Abraham, David, Moses, Saul. Ps-Hegesippus mentions these five figures a total of fifty-one times; Josephus’ *War* mentions them a grand total of seven times.¹⁹⁵ Ps-Hegesippus was inspired to infuse his work with biblical *exempla* in part by his classicizing, Jewish source. But the presence of biblical figures in Josephus’ *War* is a drop in the bucket of what we find in *De Excidio*, and thus the former does not explain the latter. Biblical *exempla* played a minor part in Josephus’ narration of the Roman–Jewish War. They play a major part for Ps-Hegesippus.

Scholars who have used the Roman discourse of exemplarity as a lens with which to view early Christian literature have generally emphasized

¹⁹² In line with [Chaplin 2000](#), 3.

¹⁹³ An example from Hellenistic Judaism comes in Abraham’s treatment in 4 Macc: see [van Henten \(forthcoming\)](#).

¹⁹⁴ By contrast, these ten figures – Darius, Elijah, Elisha, Jeconiah, Joshua, Neco, Sarah, Saul, Sennacherib, Zedekiah – are mentioned a total of thirty-two times in *De Excidio*. See further [Appendix 1](#).

¹⁹⁵ The only biblical figures who appear more often by name in Josephus’ *War* than in *De Excidio* are the prophet Jeremiah (twice in *War*, once in *De Excidio*) and the Persian monarch Xerxes (thrice in *War*, twice in *De Excidio*).

one or more of three discernible trends. In one of these, Christian authors adopt the Roman *practice* of exemplarity but populate it with new content, turning Christian figures – apostles, martyrs, ascetics, monks, bishops, saints – into the de facto role models of the Christian people.¹⁹⁶ Another commonly cited mode of Christian exemplarity involves the deployment of explicitly Roman *exempla* for anti-pagan polemic.¹⁹⁷ Peter Van Nuffelen has shown how Orosius used Roman *exempla* to critique the pagan past in his *Histories against the Pagans*, much as Sulpicius Severus did in his *Life of Saint Martin*.¹⁹⁸ Rebecca Langlands has shown how, even earlier, Tertullian, Lactantius, and Minucius Felix leveraged the Roman *exemplum* Mucius Scaevola in similar directions.¹⁹⁹ Speaking of Lactantius, we should mention the famous *magna et mirabilia exempla* that he mentions at the beginning of his *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*.²⁰⁰ Lactantius refers to contemporary examples, namely those who had persecuted the Christians, whose God-ordained deaths were designed to teach (*discerent*) later generations about God, his power, and his judgment. Here find the beginnings of the mechanics of exemplarity in action – according to Matthew Roller, a cycle of (1) action, (2) evaluation, (3) commemoration, and (4) norm setting²⁰¹ – but relating to contemporary, not ancient, figures. Still, Lactantius fits into the “bad pagans” form of Christian exemplarity.

A third Christian use of *exempla* involved the adaptation of pagan *exempla* or values to Christian purposes.²⁰² Nor were these three methods of the Christian adoption of exemplarity mutually exclusive. Adam Ployd’s recent treatment of martyrs as rhetorical *exempla* in Augustine combines two of these models: He argues that Augustine’s exemplary portrait of martyrs spiritualizes the meaning of martyrdom to render it “a relevant category for Christian identity even in a time of imperial privilege for the church” (appropriation), and in so doing undermines

¹⁹⁶ Brown 1983; Williams 2008.

¹⁹⁷ Wlosok 1983.

¹⁹⁸ Van Nuffelen 2012, 64–65, 90.

¹⁹⁹ Langlands 2018, 143: “These writers have a particular investment in the reinterpretation and moral downgrading of Roman exempla, in contrast with their new and superior Christian exempla, yet at the same time they continue to find Roman exempla good material for ethical thinking.”

²⁰⁰ Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 1.7.

²⁰¹ Roller 2018, 4; Langlands 2018, 88–89, construes Roman exemplarity in terms of (1) admiration/wonder, (2) comparison, (3) *aemulatio*, (4) modeling, (5) cognition, (6) discernment.

²⁰² Fournet 2003.

Roman assumptions of a Golden Age and subsequent historical decline found in authors like Sallust and Livy (polemic).²⁰³ Likewise, Kristoffel Demoen demonstrated that Gregory Nazianzen juxtaposed pagan and biblical *exempla* as a means of delegitimizing the former even while establishing the latter.²⁰⁴ Likewise again, Ivor Davidson has identified in Ambrose's stringing together of biblical *exempla* in his *On the Duties of the Clergy* (*De Officiis*) a series of "ethical arguments which are obviously rooted in the classical tradition" yet, just as obviously, invested "with the texture of the Bible itself." Davidson sees Ambrose's aim as a Christian replacement of classical values, rather than a marriage between them – a fine line to tread (or was it?).²⁰⁵

To some extent, all of these modes of Christian exemplarity were to be anticipated. Christian values developed within the Roman world. It was inevitable that Christians build their virtues, ethics, and ideals in conversation with Roman terminology, assumptions, and even culture heroes.²⁰⁶ Was there any other option? Jerome's exemplarity exemplifies this sometimes uncomfortable marriage: In *Letter 22*, he betrays angst over being a "Ciceronian," while in *Letter 70* he effects a "defence of classical exempla."²⁰⁷ But such discomfort was arguably contrived – many Christians in late antiquity seem to have been quite at home in the pagan world. Still, Peter Van Nuffelen notes how Jerome and other authors like Ambrose and Claudian bear witness to an "intellectual battle" over *exempla* among late antique Christians. The question? "Whether it is acceptable for Christians to use pagan exempla and whether they should be replaced with Christian ones."²⁰⁸ But things were not so simple. These models do not exhaust the possibilities of Christian practices of exemplarity in late antiquity. The present study illustrates yet another way.

Another obvious set of *exempla* for early Christians were the biblical figures of *Hebrew* antiquity, the heroes of their Old Testament. And Christians did prop up these personalities as examples, good and bad.²⁰⁹ But usually such usage effectively merged this group of biblical figures into the cadre of Christian saints, placing Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (for

²⁰³ Ployd 2020.

²⁰⁴ Demoen 1996.

²⁰⁵ Davidson 2001, 1.30, 1.33.

²⁰⁶ Including their vocabulary and concept of leadership: Petitfils 2016.

²⁰⁷ Van Nuffelen 2012, 84; cf. Skemp 2011; Hamblenne 1996; Inglebert 1994; Rebenich 1992; Schneiderhan 1916.

²⁰⁸ Van Nuffelen 2012, 89.

²⁰⁹ See Finn and Dupont 2019; Goldfarb 2015.

instance) on a par with Christian saints and martyrs of the early centuries CE.²¹⁰ The preface to the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* explicitly theorizes this combination.²¹¹ Much less often did Christian authors deploy these *exempla* as national heroes of the *Jewish* past. After all, Christians had effectively appropriated that past, arrogating to themselves the Jewish Scriptures along with their stories, heroes, and rights of interpretation.²¹² When early Christian authors rattled off lists of Hebrew heroes, they were usually doing so in pursuit of pedagogical and doctrinal goals. Yet these kinds of example lists had precursors in earlier Jewish tradition, devoid of later Christian preoccupations, in texts like 1 Maccabees 2.51–60, 4 Maccabees 16.16–23, Ben Sira 44–50, Damascus Document 2–3, Wisdom of Solomon 10, and Philo’s *On the Virtues* 198ff and *On Rewards and Punishments* 1ff. These lists, usually didactic in function and sapiential in orientation, have the most in common with the biblical *exempla* of *De Excidio* – they treat the same figures and stories. However, we will see that the contexts, terms, and values used to frame *exempla* in *De Excidio* have a more classical ring.

The best illustration of a Christian example list is that of the “heroes of the faith” from the New Testament’s Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb 11).²¹³ The author lists some eighteen biblical heroes as models of faith (πίστις/*fides*). Ps-Hegesippus knew this epistle, and thus it is little coincidence that all but three of the figures mentioned in Hebrews 11 – Enoch, Noah, and Barak – appear in *De Excidio*, often in discussions of *fides*. Another example list with which Ps-Hegesippus has much in common is that of 1 Clement 4: There Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Joseph, Moses and Pharaoh, Aaron and Miriam, Dathan and Abiram, and David and Saul all appear as examples (ὑποδείγματα) of the pitfalls of jealousy

²¹⁰ Clausi 1995.

²¹¹ *Pass. Perp. Fel.* 1.1–3: “If ancient models of faith (*vetera fidei exempla*), bearing witness to God’s grace and working to build people up, were disseminated in writing so that through reading them – as if by reconsideration of matters – God might be honored and people comforted, why shouldn’t new instances be disseminated which are suitable to both goals equally? By and by these will also at some point become ancient and indispensable for those coming after, even if in their own present time they are considered of lesser authority, since honor is imputed to antiquity. But as for those who would judge the one power of the one Holy Spirit according to the passing of ages, let them see how newer things should be considered greater because they are more recent, according to the overflowing of grace determined for the last interval of the world.” From Cobb and Jacobs 2021, 22–23. See also 1 Clem 5–6 and Cyprian *Ad Fortunatum* 11. Cf. Seneca’s *Controversiae* 1 pr 6 and Langlands 2018, 98–99.

²¹² See the example of Jerome discussed by Krewson 2017.

²¹³ Cosby 1988; Eisenbaum 1997; 1996.

(ζήλος) and envy (φθόνος).²¹⁴ Ps-Hegesippus mentions all of these figures save Miriam, usually more than once, and often in similar contexts. Finally, one could make the case that Stephen's speech in Acts 7 provides a prototype for the kind of exemplarity we see in parts of *De Excidio*: rise-and-fall historical structure, proclivity for *Listenwissenschaft*, and overt comparison between contemporary Jews and ancient Hebrews are all features of both Stephen's speech and many of *De Excidio*'s *exempla*-filled speeches. But again, despite its erstwhile similarities to early Jewish and/or Christian counterparts, the biblical exemplarity of *De Excidio* differs dramatically from typical Judeo-Christian usage.

Regarding some representative Roman heroes – Horatius Cocles, Cloelia, Appius Claudius Caecus, Gaius Duilius, Fabius *Cunctator*, Cornelia, and other like figures – Matthew Roller states:

As late as the fourth and early fifth centuries CE, the historians Ammianus, Eutropius, and Orosius, along with commentators like Servius and the Latin panegyrists of the later emperors, still mention these exempla. However, most Christian writing is silent about these figures. To be sure, early Christian literature is awash in exemplarity, which closely resembles the exemplarity discussed in this book. But the values that exemplary Christian performances instantiate are those of early Christian ethics more generally – ascetic self-deprivation, the endurance of physical suffering, and humility (albeit spectacularly displayed) – which align awkwardly, if at all, with classical values. Furthermore, the performers of these deeds are “holy men” such as saints, martyrs, abbae, apostles, Biblical figures, and Christ himself. While my study does not broach this cluster of performers and values, the model of exemplarity developed in this book would, I believe, illuminate early Christian exempla no less than the classical exempla that are its primary objects of investigation.²¹⁵

This broad statement, I suggest, embodies common assumptions about the similarities and differences between classical/Roman and Christian and/or biblical *exempla*. It plays upon the Christian bent toward asceticism, monasticism, and a distinctive type of authority, practice, and discourse that could, but did not always, “align awkwardly” with the more classical forms of literary, self-fashioning elitism peddled by thinkers, speakers, and authors in late antiquity.²¹⁶ And Roller's statement is apt: Usually, both the values and the figures at the center of Christian versus non-Christian discourses of exemplarity in late antiquity differed

²¹⁴ Cf. 1 Clem 5.1. A helpful analysis of 1 Clem's *exempla* as prototypes undergirding social identity and collective memory is Esler 2007.

²¹⁵ Roller 2018, 26.

²¹⁶ On Christian engagement with these two modes in the fourth century and later, see Williams 2006, 5–15.

dramatically. But this is where *De Excidio* enriches the fabric of late antique literature.

Ps-Hegesippus *does* talk about these quintessential Roman heroes at times, though he prefers biblical *exempla*. However, even here Ps-Hegesippus' emphasis is distinctive. *De Excidio*'s biblical *exempla* appear within an overtly *Jewish* history, albeit seen through emphatically Christian eyes. The Hebrew heroes of *De Excidio* are not models for Christian behavior or even Christian history, but for an understanding of Jewish history. Similarly, while Ps-Hegesippus certainly plays upon many decidedly Christian tropes, his discourses of exemplarity do not jibe with the asceticizing ethics that Roller rightly cites as normal for late antique Christians; speaking himself or through his characters, Ps-Hegesippus highlights Roman values – *libertas*, *uirtus*, *pro patria mori* – just as much as Christian ones. At times the combination can be jarring. Ps-Hegesippus problematizes the lines often drawn between Romans (“pagans”) and Christians in their uses of *exempla* in late antiquity, because his language does not embody one or the other. It embodies both.

In applying biblical *exempla* to a Christian iteration of classical historiography about the Jews, Ps-Hegesippus sheds new light on the ways in which late ancient Christians sometimes wrote history. He also expands our ability to imagine the ways in which exemplarity functioned among Christians in the later Roman world, and where biblical figures fit within that cultural practice.

* * *

The narrower contribution of this study is to introduce a work known to few scholars today, and discussed by even fewer. The present chapter provides an up-to-date introduction to *De Excidio*. The remainder of this book constitutes a close analysis of Ps-Hegesippus' use of biblical figures. The latter approach, I have suggested, provides an idea of what *De Excidio* is like as a text, rendering this book on the whole a different kind of introduction. The broader contribution of this study speaks to the cohabitation of Christianity and classical culture within late antique literature. This broad topic has been familiar to students of antiquity for some time: Eighty years ago Charles Cochrane's *Christianity and Classical Culture* undertook a masterful intellectual history “from Augustus to Augustine”²¹⁷ (Jaroslav Pelikan's eponymous work adopted a narrower

²¹⁷ Cochrane 1940.

focus fifty years later).²¹⁸ Twenty years ago, Gillian Clark rehashed in a more accessible form the basic question regarding Christianity and the classical world: “Did Christianity transform the Roman world in which it began, or did the Roman world shape Christianity?”²¹⁹ The paradoxical answer, of course, is “yes.” And scholars continue to refine and explore aspects of this question, from the fine-grained level of language, expressed in grammar,²²⁰ to the broad-spectrum plain of culture itself, expressed in history-writing.²²¹

Recently, J. M. F. Heath has shown how Clement of Alexandria adapted a pagan literary form (the “miscellany”) to Christian purposes in his *Stromateis*.²²² Closer to home as it treats early Christian historiography, David DeVore has made the “classicism” argument with respect to Eusebius’ *Church History*.²²³ In a similar vein, the present study contributes to our growing understanding of Christianity’s adaptation of classical culture. I show how classical historiography and Roman exemplarity became Christianized within *De Excidio*. If anything, Ps-Hegesippus is an even more neglected author than Clement (and certainly than Eusebius). Thus, this book, while offering a deep introduction to *De Excidio* by exploring a key aspect of that text, also joins work like Heath’s and DeVore’s in filling out our appreciation of how the Christian and the classical, already interrelated, co-evolved in late antiquity.

The conceptual space in which this monograph seeks a place was mapped out well by Averil Cameron in her now-classic *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*:

the study of Christian discourse in the Roman world is the study of reception, and this is a two-way process – not merely how Christian discourse made its impact on society at large, but how it was itself transformed and shaped in the endeavor. Christian discourse would have been different without the environment of the Roman world; and that environment itself was subject to geographical and diachronic variance. What we study is a dynamic process in which both sides are changing.²²⁴

²¹⁸ Pelikan 1993 explores the Cappadocians’ critical juxtaposition between Hellenistic philosophy and Christian theology.

²¹⁹ Clark 2000.

²²⁰ Chin 2008.

²²¹ Corke-Webster 2019.

²²² Heath 2020.

²²³ See already DeVore 2020, and soon DeVore (forthcoming).

²²⁴ Cameron 1991, 4. Cameron’s emphasis upon discourse and literature as key objects of study within early Christian culture forms much of the methodological terrain this book seeks to tread.

This book aims to illuminate one or two obscure aspects of this process, illustrating how Roman exemplarity could be Christianized and how Christian exemplarity was fueled in some way by *Romanitas*. In this way, I seek to address “Christianization” and “Classicism” in the fourth century CE, an axial age for Christians and/or Romans by any measure. I aim to cast *De Excidio* as worthy of wider attention. I also hope to shift how we think about historiography and exemplarity as part of the larger cultural industry of molding a new conceptual and epistemological landscape within early Christian empire.²²⁵

²²⁵ In line with some ideas discussed recently in [Chin and Vidas 2015](#).

Hebrew versus Jew

Identity and Differentiation in De Excidio

De Excidio is a story focused on a particular people: the *Iudaei*, that is, the “Jews,” or, if you like, the “Judeans.” The entire narrative concentrates upon this particular people and their fated run-in with the Romans (*Romani*). Yet the present study examines *exempla* that belong to another group, distinct yet related to the *Iudaei*: namely, the *Hebraei*, the “Hebrews.” A survey of *De Excidio* reveals that the heroes of the Hebrew Bible provide an anchor for establishing who the *Hebraei* are within *De Excidio*’s narrative. Conversely, the *Hebraeus–Iudaeus* continuum/divide provides an ethnological map for placing both groups within Ps-Hegesippus’ historiographical imagination. However, as with all such games of identity and alterity, we find that Ps-Hegesippus’ treatment of Hebrew versus Jew is not altogether consistent, nor is it always crystal clear.

In juxtaposing Jews and Hebrews Ps-Hegesippus follows the precedent of earlier authors, of whom Josephus was only one. He also joins a chorus of Christian authors in late antiquity who capitalized upon this divide as a way of salvaging a people of biblical antiquity, with whom they identified, from the condemnation they were obliged to heap upon a Jewish people with whom they did not. Ps-Hegesippus shares with all of these authors an interest endemic to historical literature in the ancient Mediterranean. Todd Berzon calls this interest the “ethnographic disposition,” a proclivity to theorize and utilize the varieties and implications of difference within and between the peoples within one’s realm of knowledge.¹ In assuming and reifying a difference between *Hebraeus*

¹ Berzon 2016, see 5–6.

and *Iudaeus*, Ps-Hegesippus is not simply engaged in an enterprise of theological and ideological writing; he is also reflecting an ethnographic impulse well known within the Greco-Roman world, an impulse particularly likely to bear fruit within the genre of historiography. This industry was classical before it was ever Christian, and thus we should see Ps-Hegesippus' Hebrew versus Jew ethnography as symptomatic of his moorings not only within an embattled Judeo-Christian cultural-literary sphere, but also within an older, Greco-Roman one.

HEBRAEUS VERSUS IUDAEUS: MAPPING CONTINUUM AND DIVIDE

While the gloss *Iudaeus* (pl. *Iudaei*) appears several hundred times in *De Excidio*,² the ethnonym *Hebraeus* (pl. *Hebraei*) appears exactly twenty-four times.³ Of the latter's two dozen occurrences, half (twelve) occur in Book 5 and fully one-third (eight) appear in the long speech by Josephus before the walls of Jerusalem at 5.15–16. This density of concentration bids us look here first.

At the end of *De Excidio* 5.14.5, Caesar commands Josephus to speak to his countrymen holed up in Jerusalem in their native language (*patrio sermone*), to prevent their continued resistance and avoid their consequent destruction. Ps-Hegesippus' version of these speeches, far beyond those recounted by Josephus in the *Jewish War*, is chock full of biblical *exempla* (see Chapter 9).⁴ The point of Josephus' address is this: "cease your futile resistance against Rome and thus follow the example set by your forefathers." In *De Excidio*, this address introduces an interplay between *Hebraeus* and *Iudaeus* as monikers, suggesting simultaneous identification and differentiation between these groups.

Josephus begins his address (*De Excidio* 5.15.1) with the vocative *Hebraei* – he calls his addressees "Hebrews," implying some identification between the "Hebrews" and those to whom he is speaking: the first-century Jews inhabiting a besieged Jerusalem who are almost always elsewhere called *Iudaei* in *De Excidio*.⁵ Josephus' beginning this way

² *Iudaeorum* 87 times, *Iudaei* 69 times, *Iudaeis* 60 times, *Iudaeos* 37 times, *Iudaeus* only 4 times, *Iudaeum* once.

³ *De Excidio* Prol. 3; 1.1.1; 1.10.2 (×2); 1.16.6; 1.19.4; 1.39.1; 2.11.3; 3.16.1; 3.17.1; 3.24.1; 4.17.1; 5.9.1; 5.15.1 (×3); 5.16.1 (×5); 5.31.1; 5.31.2; 5.46.1.

⁴ Bell 1977, 201.

⁵ *De Excidio* 5.15.1: "It was human nature, O Hebrews (*Hebraei*), to fight stubbornly ..."

conveys solidarity and identity between speaker and listener, past and present. It conjures patriotic sentiment attached to national history.⁶ For Ps-Hegesippus, the Jews of the first century were not *Hebraei*, but *Iudaei*. But how these people understood themselves, in Ps-Hegesippus' imagination or in real life, is a different matter. Ps-Hegesippus is fully capable of placing ideas not his own into the mouths of his characters (see Introduction). This was common practice among ancient historians.⁷ Thus, Josephus' introduction and its ancestral ring signal how Ps-Hegesippus imagined first-century Jews might have talked among themselves. A third of the way through the same speech, Josephus shifts gears, addressing his hearers as *Iudaei* and referencing the *Hebraei* as a people of the past:

When, O Jews (*Iudaei*), has this way of thinking gone well for you, or when with the Hebrews (*apud Hebraeos*) was expedient servitude not preferred to useless liberty? The patriarch Jacob himself led the Hebrews into Egypt, lest they perish from starvation.

De Excidio 5.15.1⁸

This switch in terminology suggests that, although Josephus *can* refer to his first-century Jewish addressees as *Hebraei*, there is a distinction to be made between *Hebraei* and *Iudaei*: The former is manifestly an “old” or “traditional” or “ancestral” name for the people. The *Iudaei* look back to the *Hebraei* as ancestral *exempla*. Still, the group attached to that name can be identified with the (later) *Iudaei* in certain ways and in certain contexts. This is clarified when, following the statement just quoted, Josephus tells his hearers that “you served” (*seruistis*) the Egyptians, and then the Assyrians, Macedonians, Persians, Seleucids, and Palestinians. Josephus assumes that his hearers will understand ancient events like the Egyptian Exodus, and more recent events like Judean servitude to the Seleucid dynasty, as having effectively happened to them.⁹

The erstwhile identification of “Hebrew” with “Jew” belies the fact that, by and large, Ps-Hegesippus refers to the people's ancient ancestors

⁶ We could reasonably suppose the same for the beginning of King Herod's speech at *De Excidio* 1.39.1, which he begins: “*Causa mihi*, Hebraei ciues ...” See Bell 1977, 178ff.

⁷ See, e.g., Adler 2011.

⁸ CSEL 66.1: 320. This statement is followed by references to famous “Hebrew” ancestors: the twelve patriarchs, of which Judah, Joseph, and Benjamin are named; and Moses. Compare Agrippa's speech at *De Excidio* 2.9 and its reference to *patres*.

⁹ Cf. Josephus *Ant.* 1.5–6, which relates itself to “the origin of the Jews” (τίνας ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι) – literally, “who the Jews were from the beginning” – “from the Hebrew [language] records” (ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων), and then equates Hebrews, Jews, and Israelites. See Goodman 2017, 9, and xxv–xxvii.

when he speaks of “Hebrews.” This is borne out in *De Excidio* 5.16, a continuation of Josephus’ speech in 5.15 in which he switches from a practical, political tack of argumentation to a more theological, historical one. Ps-Hegesippus has Josephus begin by insisting that armed resistance against the Romans is not only sheer insanity, but historically forgetful and theologically uninformed:

You have not been in the habit of prevailing with such weapons. For when was the victory of the Hebrews (*Hebraeorum uictoria*) found in spear and sword? Remember whence you sprang forth and out of what you came, and how your forefathers conquered their enemies.

De Excidio 5.16.1¹⁰

Here Ps-Hegesippus’ Josephus voices a rhetorical commonplace: recounting the *mos maiorum* (the way of the ancestors) as instruction for the present. Josephus’ use of the perfect tense (*fuit*), his reference to origins (*ortus, situs*), and his labeling of the *Hebraei* as *patres uestri* to his hearers betray that here the *Hebraei* are the addressees’ ancestors. And here this ancestor–descendant matrix is a feature Ps-Hegesippus picked up from Josephus’ Greek text;¹¹ but by inserting biblical *exempla* into the speech, Ps-Hegesippus takes the discourse much further.

The remainder of Josephus’ speech follows the logical trajectory of its opening: The Hebrews did not resist superior foreign powers with arms, and thus neither should the first-century Jews who are staring down the barrel of the Roman war machine. This ethical mandate is reinforced with a plethora of positive examples. The list begins with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob (see [Chapter 9](#)). Moses receives concerted attention as an example of winning without warfare, and the recollection of the Exodus event serves to remind Josephus’ hearers/Ps-Hegesippus’ readers of the larger group being discussed: when “the Egyptians had surrounded the Hebrews (*Cinxerant Hebraeos Aegyptii*) – Moses prayed and did not fight.” Subsequent discussion continues in a similar vein: Joshua, Rahab, Gideon, Hezekiah, Elisha, Samuel, David, Asaph, Saul, Josiah, Samson, Jeremiah, Isaiah – all these figures play a part in the pastiche constructed in *De Excidio* 5.16 that

¹⁰ CSEL 66.1: 323.

¹¹ The distinction between *Hebraeus* and *Iudaeus* that Ps-Hegesippus has Josephus (the character) insinuate into the speech of *De Excidio* 5.16 will have been inspired by the real Josephus, who begins his (much shorter) Greek version of this speech in the *War* by making a broad reference to Ἰουδαῖοι (5.377), before going on to discuss Abraham, Sarah, and a few other ancient ancestors, whom he dubs Ἑβραῖοι (5.380–82).

paints a picture of *Hebrew* antiquity. The reader is routinely reminded of the identity of this august company: It is *Hebraei* who acquire victory through Gideon's divinely inspired ruse (Judg 7),¹² *Hebraei* who were conquered by Philistines preceding the miraculous return of the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam 5–6),¹³ *Hebraei* who prevailed against the Syrians (Arameans) when the miraculous sound of chariots chased the latter away (2 Kgs 7).¹⁴ It is perhaps no accident that *Iudaei* are only mentioned in this central, antiquing section of the speech once the Assyrian deportation comes into view.¹⁵

Toward the end of *De Excidio* 5.16, the *Hebraei* disappear as the *Iudaei* become the topic of conversation. After recounting a long history of the ancestors, Josephus brings his point back around. He argues that not the anger of God but internal Jewish strife resulted in Jerusalem's siege. He avers that *contentio*, *sedition*, *sacrilegia*, and the loss of *religio* account for the present plight of his listeners, whom he labels *Iudaei* several times. Most poignantly, during his concluding remarks Josephus is made to proffer a statement programmatic for *De Excidio* overall, one that solidifies the *Iudaei* within Ps-Hegesippus' construct of Hebrew/Jewish identity:

Therefore truly, inasmuch as we can discern the movement of divine will from circumstances, God is determined to oppose the Jews (*deum Iudaeis aduersari certum est*).

De Excidio 5.16.1¹⁶

¹² CSEL 66.1: 325: "The enemies, overwhelmed by such a sight, fled from there and a victory accrued to the Hebrews (*ad Hebraeos*)."

¹³ CSEL 66.1: 325–26: "When battle was instigated by the Philistines, and the Hebrews were conquered (*uicti Hebraei*), and the ark of God was captured, it was returned without any use of arms, by which evidence it was illustrated that arms are not able to conquer without *religio* but that *religio*, without arms, can."

¹⁴ CSEL 66.1: 327: "Then, unexpectedly by night there was heard within the Syrian camps the neighing of horses, the din of chariots, the rumbling of *quadrigaria*, and the sound of armed troops, striking fear into the victors because many and strong *gentes* had come to the Hebrews' aid (*in auxilium Hebraeis*) and were bearing down on them, or so they thought, and they made haste to remove themselves from the danger by flight."

¹⁵ CSEL 66.1: 329: *Abductus erat ab Assyriis populus Iudaeorum in Babyloniam* ("The Judean populace had been deported to Babylon by the Assyrians"). Before this, the *populus gentis Iudaeae* is mentioned as those harassed along with King Hezekiah by (the) Rabshakeh at the behest of Sennacherib (cf. 2 Kgs 18:19–37).

¹⁶ CSEL 66.1: 331. Shortly hereafter, Josephus recounts a miracle whereby water flowing into Jerusalem began to flow out lest its besiegers be impeded – that is, "water receded away from the Jews" (*cessauit aqua Iudaeis*) – and draws a theological parallel: "It is no wonder if divine favor has receded from the Jews ..." (*Nec mirum est si recessit a Iudaeis diuina gratia* ...).

Set against the oratorical backdrop of an overview of heroic Hebrew history, the statement *deum Iudaeis aduersari certum est* stands as a rhetorical guidepost. For the point of the preceding speech was precisely that God supported the Hebrew heroes of old – this is why they won their respective battles without (only) conventional means. In fact, within that historical survey one can witness the change from *Hebraei* to *Iudaei*, as it were, in a reference to the Divided Kingdom, when Israel/Samaria in the North split from Judah in the South: Ps-Hegesippus has Josephus remember when the *populus Iudaeorum* was taken into captivity by the Assyrians, a deportation that affected only Israel/Samaria in 722 BCE. The Babylonian deportation is also referenced in *De Excidio* 5.16 vis-à-vis the *Iudaei* – the construction of the Second Temple under Cyrus and Darius comes under discussion here as well. The great political failures within the nation’s history mark basic turning points in the nation’s identity. If one were forced to designate a period where Hebrew identity slid into Jewish within *De Excidio* 5.16, the end of the Israelite and Judean monarchies in the late eighth and early sixth centuries BCE, respectively, seem likely candidates. Yet, even if Ps-Hegesippus’ understanding of *Hebraeus* as distinct from *Iudaeus* is chronological – something that itself is problematic, as we will see – the distinction between the two is first of all ethical, and theological.

The ethical freight of the Hebrew name is best illustrated in *De Excidio* 3.16–17 (see further [Chapter 8](#)). There one finds an implicit distinction between Hebrew and Jew in speeches made by Josephus’ countrymen and Josephus himself. In 3.16, the Jews at Jotapata attempt to dissuade Josephus from surrendering to the Romans. They couch a series of *exempla* from the Scriptures within rhetorical questions as a means of asking Josephus: “Where is your loyalty to your country and your people?” At the end of this long list, which includes Moses, Aaron, Saul and Jonathan, and David, along with reference to the *lex diuina*, Josephus’ comrades ask: “Where is the God of the Hebrews, who teaches the righteous to have contempt for death ...?” (*Vbi Hebraeorum deus, qui docet iustos mortis contemptum habere ...?*).¹⁷ These same speakers bemoaned Josephus’ impending capitulation as representing “the greater downfall of the Jewish name” (*maior Iudaei nominis ruina*). In an effort to avoid ruin in the Jewish present, Josephus’ fellow Jews herald the assumed bravery of a Hebrew past. Such an understanding comports with Josephus’

¹⁷ CSEL 66.1: 211.

response in 3.17. There, refusing suicide as an option, Josephus states in a prayer addressed to God as *omnipotens pater*:

It is a good thing to die, but if I die it will be as a Hebrew (*sed si moriar ut Hebraeus*), not as a brigand, not as a murderer, not as an enemy. So be it that I have been conquered in war; yet I will remain what I was born, since I have not deserted the inheritance of father Abraham (*Abrahae patris hereditatem*).

De Excidio 3.17.1¹⁸

Like his interlocutors, Josephus taps his ancestral past in order to justify present action.¹⁹ In so doing, Ps-Hegesippus' Josephus signals an ideology in which the Hebrew past shares a hereditary connection to the Jewish present of *De Excidio*'s narrative, but which is presented as existing at a conceptual remove from it, an idealized Hebrew antiquity counterpoised to a problematic Jewish "modernity" (see [Chapter 4](#)). Yet matters of virtue and theology overtake issues of chronology: The notion of a "God of the Hebrews" and the possibility of Hebrew-esque action in the present collapse diachronic distinctions. All parties involved agree that virtuous behavior *performed by Jews* is to be associated with *Hebrew* values. *Hebraeus* and *Iudaeus* may be related, but they are assumed to have distinctive meanings and ethical valences.

De Excidio 3.16–17 and 5.15–16 represent *De Excidio* as a whole in juxtaposing an ancient, noble, pious people (the *Hebraei*) with a more recent, ignoble, impious people (the *Iudaei*). And indeed, when one looks back one sees that this differentiation is already hinted at from the very beginning of the work. Indeed, the self-described impetus of the work hinges upon this fulcrum. At the end of *De Excidio*'s Prologue, we read:

And lest any suspect us of having undertaken a task devoid of faith and superfluous, we should consider *the entire race off from the Hebrews*, embodied in its leaders, such that it may be crystal clear *whether that generation had nowhere been cut off from the loins of Judah or had genuinely failed in the series of kings*, yet remained in him in whom all things remain restored and who himself was the hope of the nations. Therefore henceforth let me take up my introduction.

De Excidio Prologue 3²⁰

Ps-Hegesippus anticipates Christian misapprehension of the significance, trustworthiness, and piety of his work. Thus he broaches the polemicizing interpretive question of Gen 49:10 regarding legitimacy

¹⁸ CSEL 66.1: 219.

¹⁹ The usual function of ancestral *exempla*: [Roller 2018](#), 8.

²⁰ CSEL 66.1: 4; emphases mine.

of succession.²¹ He asks the reader to consider the entire Hebrew race (*genus Hebraeorum*) via its leadership: Did that noble lineage (*successio*) remain among the Jews, or did it remain (only) in Christ, that is, the “hope of nations” (*spes gentium*)?²² Clearly, the reader is meant to opt for the latter and thereby affirm a major tenet of Christian supersessionist self-understanding. In this way, Ps-Hegesippus frames his history around the question: “What ever happened to the Hebrews?” From the outset, the Hebrews provide a critical subtext to *De Excidio*’s narrative logic.

Immediately after the end of the Prologue, Ps-Hegesippus again mentions Hebrews: In narrating the outrages of Antiochus and anticipating the beginnings of the Maccabean revolt, Ps-Hegesippus relates how Antiochus ordered that the “rites of the Hebrews” (*ritus Hebraeorum*) be profaned even “while many Jews were protesting” this (*postulanti-bus plerisque Iudaeis*; *De Excidio* 1.1.1).²³ This again draws an implicit distinction between the (older) *ritus* (and *mysteria*) of the Hebrews and the “modern-day” *Iudaei* who inherited and practiced them. However, at this period within Ps-Hegesippus’ history an oblique seam between Hebrew and Jew appears. *De Excidio* 1.10 narrates some of the martial engagements between Demetrius III Eukairos (or Akairos; d. c. 87 BCE)²⁴ and the Hasmonean King Alexander Jannaeus (c. 127–c. 76 BCE; r. 103–76 BCE) during Demetrius’ Judean campaign of 89/88 BCE.²⁵ At *De Excidio* 1.10.1, we read that Demetrius led a force that included “ten thousand Jews that had joined him” (*decem milia quoque Iudaeorum sibi conspirantium*) to meet Alexander at Shechem and that none of these defected from Demetrius there.²⁶ However, once Alexander had been defeated and fled, things changed:

But contrary to the hope of either, the appearance of victory came to one of them, but the profit thereof accrued to the other, because Demetrius was exposed by the secession of the *Hebrews* (*Demetrius nudatus est discessu Hebraeorum*), who had invited him to an alliance, and of these six thousand joined themselves

²¹ See Somenzi 2009, 151–56.

²² Early Christians explicitly identified Jesus with Judah: Rev 5:5; cf. Matt 1:2–3.

²³ CSEL 66.1: 4; *De Excidio* 1.1.1.

²⁴ See Levenson and Martin 2009.

²⁵ In Josephus *War* 1.92–97 we read that these engagements involved οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι on both sides, with some remaining loyal to Alexander and some working as allies of Demetrius (see further *War* 1.88–91; *De Excidio* 1.9). The tides of battle turned when, contrary to all expectation, the Ἰουδαῖοι who had asked for Demetrius’ help in defeating Alexander defected to the latter (*War* 1.95). In *De Excidio*, this shift of loyalty seems to be marked by terminology.

²⁶ CSEL 66.1: 14–15.

to Alexander after the manner of human nature by inclining to pity in the face of adverse circumstances. Thus Demetrius ceded to him whom he had conquered in battle, seeing that he [Alexander] was now ready for battle due to the gradual accumulation of *Hebreus* (*affluentibus paulatim Hebraeis*) and that he himself was left with few troops.

De Excidio 1.10.2²⁷

Ps-Hegesippus refers to the *Iudaei* who reverted to Alexander Jannaeus' side (i.e., their "native" side) as *Hebraei*. At *De Excidio* 1.11.1 the narrative returns to discussing *Iudaei* as the narrative's actors. Here, then, we have an ambiguous passage where *Hebraeus* and *Iudaeus* bleed together within the narrativization of first-century Judean history. But this is not the last time this happens. At *De Excidio* 1.16.5, we find Pompey besieging Jerusalem and marveling at the religious endurance of the Jews/priests in the face of war. Then:

There was no manner of sparing, yet nor were the cult functions of the religious leaders impeded by such savagery of the fighters. The enemy threatened with swords bared, yet they discharged the order of their accustomed observance without being bothered in the least. The ceremonial order was not interrupted at all. One could see that whatever pertained to the ritual of purification or to the observance of the sacred cult was carried out; such care was taken in the ministry—if only it had been done in true piety and faith! And so the greater dangers arose from among themselves, which were in turn brought by the *Hebrews* against themselves (*quae sibi ab Hebraeis inuicem inferebantur*), and the internal fight was more violent, and it hit closer to home because of those who were factious, and there was thus a two-headed danger. An external enemy pressed from the front, a domestic one from the back and sides.

De Excidio 1.16.6²⁸

Once again, here first-century inhabitants of Judea are called *Hebraei*. Ps-Hegesippus makes a similar identification again at 1.19.4, which contains a description of the reception of Aulus Gabinius' division of the former Hasmonean Kingdom (57–55 BCE):

This was received with gratitude by the Romans because it alleviated the fear of rebellion, and by the *Jews* because it eliminated jealousy (*a Iudaeis ad deponendam inuidiam*), because the *Hebrew* race used to live not under a king but under noblemen in a manner similar to the Roman state (*quoniam non sub rege sed sub optimatibus degeret Hebraeorum genus ad rei publicae Romanae similitudinem*), in which one man did not hold power, but rather the noblemen by turn, to whom

²⁷ CSEL 66.1: 15; emphases mine.

²⁸ CSEL 66.1: 27; emphasis mine.

the magistracy had fallen by lot, administered [the affairs of state] not as sharers of the kingdom but as representatives of the king.

De Excidio 1.19.4²⁹

Here the *Iudaei* could be read as standing in apposition to the *genus Hebraeorum* – a combination of regional/ethnic (“Judean”) and racial/kinship (“Hebrew”) terminologies – or *Hebraeus* and *Iudaeus* simply once again mark distinct chronological points within a shared ethnic continuum.

At certain places in Book 1 of *De Excidio*, *Iudaeus* and *Hebraeus* experience temporary fluidity. What are we to make of this vis-à-vis the ethical distinction marked between these groups elsewhere within *De Excidio*? It may be that the period described between *De Excidio* 1.10 and 1.19 – that is, 88–55 BCE – was one that, in Ps-Hegesippus’ mind, marked an effective turning point from *Hebraeus* to *Iudaeus*. In these years, Judea moved from its height of power under the Hasmonean King Alexander Jannaeus to being split up into Galilee, Samaria, and Judea; Judea moved from autonomous rule to a fractured, dependent state, never to return. Such a definitive break could fit with perceived historical “fissures” caused by events like Pompey’s breaking into Jerusalem and its Temple and Gabinius’ flattening and restructuring of local (Hasmonean, autonomous) rule. Such a shift would also explain how the Maccabees/Hasmoneans fit within Ps-Hegesippus’ conception of the *Hebraei* of the past, a group into which they are situated *de facto* at 5.2.1 and 5.5.1.3;³⁰ implicitly, the Maccabees mentioned at *De Excidio* 1.1.1–2 may also be *Hebraei*, or at least stand at the crossroads.³¹ The impression that the Maccabees mark “the final Hebrew generation” for Ps-Hegesippus is strengthened by some historical editorializing at *De Excidio* 2.1.2. There, recording popular response to Herod’s death and describing the lawsuit that resulted in Caesar’s apportioning his kingdom among his surviving

²⁹ CSEL 66.1; emphases mine. Cf. Josephus *Ant.* 11.111 and Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 1.6.5–9. Ps-Hegesippus shows “a greater concern with Rome and with developments in Palestine as seen from a Roman point of view than does Josephus” (Bell 1977, 101–2).

³⁰ At *De Excidio* 5.2.1, Ps-Hegesippus speaks of the *fides Macchabaeorum* as a now-lost impulse among the Jews that previously (*quondam*) witnessed their victory over many enemies. At 5.5.1.2, it is implied that “the things carried out against the Maccabees by rival priests” (*quae aduersum Macchabaeos gesserint sacerdotii competitores*) were unjust.

³¹ The rare proximity of *Hebraeus* and *Iudaeus* in *De Excidio* 1.1.1 (note 23 above) occurs in a section of the narrative populated by the *duces Macchabaei* and specifically *Iudas Macchabaeus* in 1.1.2, who is not called a *Iudaeus*. The Maccabees are praised profusely in *De Excidio* 1.1 and their deaths are bemoaned – it is easy to imagine Ps-Hegesippus casting them not with the *Iudaei* but with the older, heroic *Hebraei*.

relatives (4 BCE),³² Ps-Hegesippus outlines a theory of Hebrew to Jewish decline. Here the first-century Maccabean to Herodian transition marks a kind of “tipping point” in Judean politics:

Caesar and the Senate ought to have had pity on the remnants of Judea which, once sustained by a free people, opted for slavery, if it were somehow supportable that they be allowed to endure under a just king. For there had long been absent one to rule by right of law, since indeed the kingship was open to no one among the Jews except to him who had come from the line of Judah, as the Law states. But truly that Idumean race, which no lineage of royal descent had touched, had crept into this honor not due it, since Antipater was an ancestor to them and to Archelaus, standing out by means of wealth and powerful in other respects—mostly in his friendship with the Romans—and tested in war by the elder Caesar. Though he had been able to claim the kingdom for himself, at no time had he aspired to this, but preferred rather to guard it from others than take it for himself, and rightly was he thought to have been an ideal guardian, who had delivered Judea to liberty by his wounds and had not led it into slavery. On the testimony of Anthony, Herod, who had been a paternal host to him, had ascended to the kingship; the affairs of the Jews diminished on his account, who led as an enemy and not as a guide. Since, therefore, he himself had been a counterfeit king, how was it possible for a legitimate royal line to originate in him? This is not to denigrate by how much less they lived under a kingship, but rather to show that, under Rome, whose favor had already been established for them by the Maccabees, *they thereafter degenerated* so much by usurpation of royal authority that they were inferior by far to those against whom they sought Rome’s alliance.

De Excidio 2.1.2³³

The Maccabees had cemented a stable relationship with Rome, following which the Jews, under Herod, “degenerated” (*degenerauerint*). It was Herod the Great and his rule (37–4 BCE) that marked “the decline of the Jews (or Jewish state)” (*ex illo Iudaeorum res imminutas*). It may well be that the Maccabees were a kind of “final Hebrew generation” in Ps-Hegesippus’ mind, after which the nation devolved into Herodian Jews. Nor should it be missed that Ps-Hegesippus’ presentation of Herod qua historical tipping point reflects a Eusebian idea.³⁴

Another, perhaps alternative or perhaps complementary, explanation for the conflation of Hebrew and Jew in *De Excidio* Book 1 is that

³² *De Excidio* parallels portions of Book 2 of Josephus’ *War* at first, but its reworking of the latter renders source analysis difficult. Ussani makes a noble effort to track Ps-Hegesippus’ restructuring in his apparatus (see [Appendix 2](#)). Much of *De Excidio* 2.1.2 has no Josephan parallel, but constitutes a lengthy discussion of Ps-Hegesippus’ own contrivance.

³³ CSEL 66.1: 131; emphasis mine.

³⁴ Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 1.6.2ff may have been influenced by this line of reasoning.

Ps-Hegesippus is providing a distinctively Roman perspective on Jewish identity, wherein Jews were viewed through the lens of some vague, ancient “Hebrew” culture with which Ps-Hegesippus sometimes portrays Romans as being familiar. We already saw a Hebrew/Jew mixture surrounding Pompey’s journey into Judea. But it is Titus who so often in *De Excidio*’s narrative speaks of Hebrews when discussing first-century Jews/Judeans. At *De Excidio* 3.24.1, Titus makes a rousing speech to his men preceding a battle at Tarichaeae. In the version of the speech found in Josephus’ *Jewish War* (3.472–84), Titus speaks exclusively of the Ἰουδαῖοι. In Ps-Hegesippus, while Titus identifies the Romans’ enemy as *numerus* ... *plebis Iudaeae*, in the next sentence he refers to them as *Hebraei*:

For there is among the Hebrews (*in Hebraeis*) no knowledge at all of military affairs, nor experience in waging war nor respect for moderation, nor custom of discipline, nor endurance to persevere.

De Excidio 3.24.1³⁵

What is odd is that this terminology appears only once. Hereafter, Titus reverts to speaking of “the enemy” as *Iudaei*.³⁶ This gives the impression that *Hebraeus* was, among other things for Ps-Hegesippus, perhaps a realistic etic (i.e., Roman) term for referring to first-century *Iudaei* via their ancestral legacy. Titus again mentions *Hebraei* near the end of *De Excidio* at 5.46. Here Titus is making a final speech to the Jewish rebels (John, Simon), explaining and justifying the Roman position. As part of this discourse, he recounts Roman achievements and maintains the superiority of *Romanitas* vis-à-vis “Hebrew” tradition. He brings up the story of the Jordan River’s reversal on behalf of ancient Israel from Josh 3:8–5:1 (he calls it “your Jordan,” *uester Iordanes*) and trumps this putative phenomenon by citing the Roman myth in which the Roman virgin Cloelia, imprisoned by the Etruscans, broke her chains and fled her captors by swimming across the river (back to Rome).³⁷ The clear point is that while a river changed its natural course on behalf of the Hebrews/Jews, ancient Romans “dominated” nature in order to overcome the

³⁵ CSEL 66.1: 229.

³⁶ In the latter part of his speech, it is “to the Jews” (*Iudaeis*) that Titus hyperbolically considers the *uictores gentium et principes orbis terrarum* (i.e., the Romans) as “equal” (*pares*); he refers again to the enemy as *hostis Iudaeus* and ends by saying: “[Based on all these things] I think that it will be more undignified to have ceded to the Jews/Judeans (*cessisse nos Iudaeis*), when we are able to overcome them, than to have fought.”

³⁷ *De Excidio* 5.46.1 (CSEL 66.1: 397–98): “Your Jordan may have reversed course, as you say, and returned to its source so that your path might be clear, [but] the Roman virgin Cloelia had no need of this, [she who], having broken her bonds, fled from the enemy and, hastening to the river, brought herself into the Roman camp.”

same kinds of (aquatic) obstacles.³⁸ They did not need such miracles. Next, Titus states:

Nor do we marvel at your fires, from which you are accustomed to sing great songs of Hebrew boys having escaped.

De Excidio 5.46.1³⁹

Hereafter Titus avers that Mucius Scaevola, a figure of Roman antiquity of a similar vintage to Cloelia,⁴⁰ was even more impressive than these three inasmuch as he held his own hand in a fire and did not remove it.⁴¹ Titus knows the tradition of the three young men in Daniel 3, where Daniel's three comrades are said to have escaped from a blazing fire into which Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown. He speaks of *Hebraei pueri*, not *Iudaei pueri*, within that tradition. And while Titus does not address his listeners as *Iudaei* explicitly, it is implied: He calls stories like that of the three young men *fabulae Iudaeae*. Titus utilizes the term *Hebraeus* to signal a tradition older than, yet connected to, the *Iudaei* who populate *De Excidio*'s narrative.⁴²

Whatever the reasons, Ps-Hegesippus distinguishes between the *Iudaei*, who appear on every page, and the *Hebraei*, who are rarely named within *De Excidio*'s storyline. The distinction between the two has a definite chronological factor: The Hebrews are ancient, the Jews current. However, this feature of the Hebrew/Jew divide is ambiguous and occasionally inconsistent. Much clearer is the veneration in which the *Hebraei* are held, both by Ps-Hegesippus and by his historical characters; this in contradistinction to the *Iudaei*, who come off looking not great in *De Excidio*. Thus, the distinction between Hebrew and Jew in

³⁸ The episode serves "die Macht des jüdischen Gottes zu relativieren. Nicht nur der Gott der Juden kann die Wasser bändigen!" [Sehlmeyer 2009](#), 196.

³⁹ CSEL 66.1: 398: *Nec incendia uestra miramur, de quibus Hebraeos pueros euasisse maximos edere cantus soletis.*

⁴⁰ Ps-Hegesippus here betrays knowledge of at least two of the three figures that "sometimes appear as a heroic 'trptych'" within the history of the Roman republic: Horatius Cocles, Cloelia, and Mucius Scaevola are foundational *exempla* of the Roman historiographical tradition popularized by Livy; see [Roller 2018](#), 32–33. Note, e.g., Florus 1.4.8: "Three prodigies and miracles of Roman name, Horatius, Mucius and Cloelia, which would seem nowadays to be fictions if they were not found in the history books"; discussed in [Langlands 2018](#), 88–89.

⁴¹ *De Excidio* 5.46.1 (CSEL 66.1: 398): "Our Mucius put his hand into the fire forced by no one, nor did he remove it, and while he was victor over the flames, wonder at his fortitude filled his enemies, of he who did not feel the flames."

⁴² In Titus' speech, "[z]wei Geschichtsbilder stehen sich gegenüber," so the reader realizes that "[d]ie Römer, so der Sinn der Textstelle, haben *exempla*, die den alttestamentarischen mindestens äquivalent sind"; [Sehlmeyer 2009](#), 220.

De Excidio is to be made along the lines of virtue: The ancient Hebrews are ethically, and we might say religiously, superior to the Jews, according to Ps-Hegesippus. The Hebrews are heroes; the Jews are not.

HEBREW HEROES AND JEWISH ANTI-HEROES

The Hebrews are a group Ps-Hegesippus lionizes, the Jews a group he denigrates. This becomes clear in the heroes and anti-heroes who embody these two collectives. As already mentioned, a vast cadre of famous biblical personalities are associated with the *Hebraei* in speeches like those of *De Excidio* 3.16–17 and 5.15–16. In addition, two individuals in particular are named as *Hebraei*: David and Joshua.

At *De Excidio* 4.17, Ps-Hegesippus undertakes a topographical description of Jericho and its environs, beginning thus:⁴³

For there is an abundant spring near the city of Jericho which is quite profitable for drinking and is rich for irrigation – this city which Joshua Naue, a Hebrew by birth (*natione Hebraeus*), first seized with a strong hand from the race of the Canaanites.

De Excidio 4.17.1⁴⁴

Ps-Hegesippus identifies Joshua, always *Iesu Naue* in *De Excidio*,⁴⁵ as *Hebraeus natione*, “Hebrew by birth” or “of the Hebrew nation/race.” This nomenclature corresponds to Josephus’ identification of Joshua as Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναυῆ παῖς στρατηγὸς Ἑβραίων (*War* 4.459). At *De Excidio* 4.17, Joshua’s labeling has an antiquating, heroizing effect. Ps-Hegesippus’ discussion of Jericho’s region, like Josephus’, has overtly to do with early beginnings (*Is in principio corruptior habitus*).⁴⁶ To make Joshua the Hebrew domesticator of the site renders him an ancient and important figure whose imprint remains on the topography of “modern” Judea. It also configures Ps-Hegesippus’ semantic category *Hebraeus* as one denoting originary, founding, ancient events. *Hebraeus* is a category not only ancient but legendary, distinguished by significant heroes and actions (Joshua *eripuit* Jericho from the Canaanites *manu ualidis*).

Here, borrowing a page from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin,⁴⁷ we might note an important chronotopic aspect of *Hebraei* in *De Excidio*

⁴³ Cf. Josephus *War* 4.459–75.

⁴⁴ CSEL 66.1: 267.

⁴⁵ Joshua is only mentioned here and at *De Excidio* 5.2.1 and 5.16.1.

⁴⁶ Compare Josephus’ πρώτην εἰλε.

⁴⁷ See Bakhtin 1981, 225 *et alibi*.

(“chronotope” referring to the co-configuration of time and space in narrative): Namely, Ps-Hegesippus frames the “Hebrews” in many ways within a uniform time (“of old”) and the stereotyped place of “the ancient world” (or “old Israel”). Old Testament heroes are never actors in *De Excidio*’s narrative, but nearly mythic reminders of a quasi-epic past. We will see this most fully in [Chapter 9](#), where a long list of ancient Hebrews (“the fathers”) is effectively collocated within an imagined narrative construct of collective, scripturalized memory (*De Excidio* 5.15–16). Yet at the same time, with Joshua and David here we find that these age-old culture heroes are decisively linked to at least the “topic” present of *De Excidio*’s here and now by their close links with places discussed in the present of Ps-Hegesippus’ narrative (Jericho and Jerusalem, respectively). Thus, the *Hebraei* in *De Excidio* are not an ahistorical bunch, but they are differently historical than are the *Iudaei*, who nevertheless come to share in their narrative place (Judea).⁴⁸

As Joshua’s example shows, *Hebraeus* qua identifier conjures antiquity and heroic virtue. The same holds with David’s presentation as *Hebraeus* in Ps-Hegesippus’ *ekphrasis* on Jerusalem:

From the beginning [Jerusalem] held as its inhabitants those from the race of the Canaanites. David was the first man of the Hebrew race (*primus uir gentis Hebraeae*) to expel the Canaanites, establish his own [people], and make in the city a royal residence for himself.

De Excidio 5.9.1⁴⁹

This note is based on Josephus’ *Jewish War* 6.438–39, though Josephus there calls David ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων βασιλεὺς. But for Ps-Hegesippus, David is a Hebrew.⁵⁰ Like Joshua, David is associated in *De Excidio* with the ancient Hebrew beginnings of an important biblical site (cf. 1.1.8).⁵¹ Both Joshua and David represent the original appropriation of what would become “biblical” lands in the Christian imagination. Ps-Hegesippus adopts a mythology of toponymy and geography: Hebrew heroes populate the mythical backdrop of *De Excidio*’s history as those who wrenched sacred places from “pagan” hands and introduced them into the storyline of biblical-theistic history. The Hebrew past that Ps-Hegesippus imagines and constructs is populated by heroic

⁴⁸ Thanks to Jeremy Schott for encouraging me to explore this distinction.

⁴⁹ CSEL 66.1: 309.

⁵⁰ Cf. Gelasius *Hist. Eccl.* frag 4c 21, where David is “King of the Hebrews”; Wallraff, Stutz, and Marinides 2018, 33.

⁵¹ Cf. Elisha vis-à-vis *De Excidio* 4.17.1 as well ([Chapter 7](#)).

figures and set in places reminiscent of, and thus defined by, those figures. Joshua and David both simultaneously help define, and belong to, Ps-Hegesippus' category of *Hebraeus*. In this they join the other figures mentioned at *De Excidio* 3.16–17, 5.15–16, and elsewhere. At 3.17 the character Josephus epitomizes Ps-Hegesippus' notion of a heroized Hebrew antiquity when he casts being a *Hebraeus* as tantamount to clinging to the *hereditas Abrahae patris*.⁵² For Ps-Hegesippus, the *Hebraei* are ancient heroes who form the historical backdrop and ethical gauge of Jewish history.

Like Hebrew nobility, Jewish un-nobility is essentialized within characters of *De Excidio*'s narrative: in particular, the Jewish factional leaders Simon bar Giora, John of Gischala, and Eleazar ben Simon, together largely responsible for fomenting the Jewish rebellion against Rome.⁵³ In contradistinction to Hebrew nobility, Jewish perfidy is a central theme of *De Excidio*. Unlike the *Hebraei*, the *Iudaei* appear on virtually every page of *De Excidio*. As a group they are the primary actors of the history, which is after all the story of the final destruction of Jerusalem and, we should add, of the *Iudaei* as well. One of the most illuminating ways by which to illustrate the ideological chasm between *Iudaeus* and *Hebraeus* for Ps-Hegesippus is to consider several grammatical constructs and narrative contexts in which *Iudaeus* appears. Consider the uses of the genitive plural *Iudaeorum* attached to telling nouns: At the very beginning of the work (Prol. 1), Ps-Hegesippus charges Josephus as a *consors* to the “perfidy of the Jews” (*perfidiae Iudaeorum*).⁵⁴ (It is also to *perfidia* [and *avaritia*] on the part of Jews that Ps-Hegesippus imputes the breaking of the Aaronic priestly line.)⁵⁵ At *De Excidio* 1.9.3,

⁵² Dwyer 1931 notes that *hereditas*, “descendants” or “an inheritance,” is a Late Latin term first used by Ps-Hegesippus (30).

⁵³ See *De Excidio* 4.22, 25; 5.1.

⁵⁴ The fact that in Prol. 1 Ps-Hegesippus refers to the Babylonian captivity as the *captivitas Iudaeorum* points to the fact that he is writing a *historia Iudaeorum* (Prol. 2), only later to introduce the complicating factor *Hebraeorum*, in Prol. 3. See also *De Excidio* 2.12.1, where Ps-Hegesippus charges Josephus with *perfidia* in his treatment of Jesus.

⁵⁵ *De Excidio* 2.13.8–9 (CSEL 66.1: 171). Here Ps-Hegesippus describes how either by *avaritia* or *perfidia* “the institutions of our *maiores* were corrupted, the laws of *religio* were violated, the protections of old were torn up, and thus not without reason did divine aid abandon them. Thence things have proceeded by all manner of injustices as though against an empty people, so that with domestic insurrections they have turned their hands against themselves, they have been harassed by grievous acts of plunder, the most abominable judges have been chosen by lot, so that those who are even more worthless might succeed those who are [already] bad.”

Ps-Hegesippus characterizes “domestic rebellion” (*domestica seditio*) and “sedition” (*contentio*) as a “plague” (*pestis*) characteristic of the Jews.⁵⁶ At 1.40.2, he attributes Herod’s *licentia* in collecting many wives to his love for “the practice of the Jews” (*usus Iudaeorum*), “who,” he continues, “fashioned the figures of their ancestors (*figuras maiorum*) as a pretext for their own vices.”⁵⁷ This stereotype improves upon Josephus’ more innocuous note at War 1.477.⁵⁸ Perhaps the most notable example of such anti-Jewish nominal syntax comes at *De Excidio* 3.1, where Ps-Hegesippus describes the death of Nero and presages the rise of Vespasian:

But God arranged it so that this man [Vespasian] was directed to Syria, who shattered the insolence of the Jews by the final destruction of the race and the indignity of captivity (*qui et Iudaeorum insolentiam supremo gentis excidio captiuitatisque dedecore labefactaret*), and so that he abandoned helping Nero, although no *uirtus* is able to place an impediment before those things which heaven has ordained.

De Excidio 3.1.3⁵⁹

This passage, immediately preceding the only mention of specific Christians (Peter in Paul) in all of *De Excidio* (at 3.2),⁶⁰ stands as a definitive description of the *Iudaei*: They are defined by *insolentia*, and the divinely ordained fate of the *gens* is *supremum excidium* and *captiuitas*. Unlike the *Hebraei*, the *Iudaei* in *De Excidio* are a people characterized

⁵⁶ *De Excidio* 1.9.3 (CSEL 66.1: 13): “A domestic rebellion interrupted these successes in war, and the dispute, having arisen in social gatherings, advanced to war by a plague of the sort familiar to the men of the Jews (*familiari peste huiusmodi Iudaeorum uiris*), that they stir themselves to arms from festive play.” This is a creative and subtle expansion of Josephus War 1.88: Bay 2021b, 167.

⁵⁷ *De Excidio* 1.40.2 (CSEL 66.1: 85): “For Herod had many [wives], even beyond royal custom, since he relished, as if it provided some license for sin, the practice of the Jews (*Iudaeorum usu*), who fashioned the figures of their ancestors as a pretext for their own vices” (*qui figuras maiorum uitii suis obtentui ducunt*). The use of *duco* here (L&S, *ad loc.* [1.β.6]) applied to the *figurae maiorum* may correspond to the Roman tradition of aristocratic engagement with the “figures” (*figurae*) and “faces” (*imagines*) of the ancestors as a kind of familial technology of the self. Ps-Hegesippus was possibly influenced by Sallust *Bellum Jugurthinum* 4.5–9 in rendering this passage.

⁵⁸ “His wives were numerous, since polygamy was permitted by Jewish custom and the king gladly availed himself of the privilege” (LCL 203: 225).

⁵⁹ CSEL 66.1: 183.

⁶⁰ *De Excidio* 3.1.3 (CSEL 66.1: 183): “Nevertheless, demented as he [Nero] was, when he learned that the Roman army had been struck by a serious blow in the war with the Jews, he rose up against the Christians (*cum Iudaeorum bello adflicta Romani exercitus ualidam manum cognouisset, aduersus Christianos insurrexit*), so that the end owed to him hastened forth.”

by *contentio*, *insolentia*, *licentia*, *perfidia*, *seditio*, and *uitia*, whose historical destination is deity-mandated destruction.⁶¹

Further “noun + *Iudaeorum*” constructions help round out Ps-Hegesippus’ grammar of anti-Judaism. Often this language describes Jewish disposition in battle, an important feature of martial causality and ethnic/racial stereotype in *De Excidio*. In describing Roman–Jewish conflict at 3.4.3, Ps-Hegesippus speaks of the *temeritas Iudaeorum*, which is not repressed (*repressa*) but rather inflamed (*incanduit*) by their being slaughtered in a one-sided battle.⁶² At 5.13.2, Ps-Hegesippus makes reference to the general “treacheries of the Jews” (*insidiae Iudaeorum*) in battle.⁶³ At 5.26.2, the *audacia Iudaeorum* temporarily increases (*successit*) as a new wall strengthens their position against the Romans.⁶⁴ Such *temeritas*, *insidiae*, *audacia*, not always vices, are still inherently related to *seditio*, one of the primary crimes imputed to the Jews in *De Excidio*. Introducing a digression about the Dead Sea at 4.18.1, Ps-Hegesippus avers:

For it is better to occupy the pen with the descriptions of ancient sites or the wonder of unusual elements than with the seditions of the Jews, since while the latter provoke one’s soul with outrage, the former ease the soul as they survey and recall the knowledge of ancient history.

De Excidio 4.18.1⁶⁵

Here Ps-Hegesippus kills two birds with one stone, justifying a geographical aside while recalling one of the work’s primary tropes (*seditio Iudaeorum*).

One of the most ideologically programmatic statements in all of *De Excidio*, at 5.32, introduces another complicating factor to the *Hebraeus/Iudaeus* distinction. This chapter illustrates how, for Ps-Hegesippus, the ethical distance between *Hebraeus* and *Iudaeus* can overcome the temporal divide. Following a final speech by Josephus attempting to dissuade his countrymen (led by John of Gischala) from ensuring their own destruction by perduring against the Romans, we read:

Josephus finished his speech, but John was moved by none of these tears nor dissuaded by promises. For already God had long since been driving on their perfidious minds, by which they were to defile themselves with impious parricide

⁶¹ This kind of characterization is one that ancient historians often used to describe enemies or “others” – e.g., Caesar in his *Bellum Gallicum* – and is not one of the typical Jewish stereotypes described by Isaac 2004, 440–81.

⁶² CSEL 66.1: 191.

⁶³ CSEL 66.1: 316.

⁶⁴ CSEL 66.1: 361–62.

⁶⁵ CSEL 66.1: 269.

by crucifying Jesus Christ (*Vrguebat deus iam dudum perfidas mentes, ex quo se impio parricidio commacularunt Christum Iesum crucifigentes*). This is he whose death was the destruction of the Jews, born of Mary, who came to them and whose own did not receive him. For when did the Jews ever not kill their own? Did they not kill the son of their own Saul? Certainly Naboth the prophet was stoned by them. It was Jezebel the Jewess who commanded the Jewish elders, who obeyed [her] precept, Ahab the Jew who arranged the cause of his death. How many other of their citizens were killed by their own people? And yet their city [Jerusalem] remained intact for a long time; even if it was demolished by the Babylonians after so many years, it was still repaired thereafter. But *this* was its final destruction, after which the Temple was irreparable, because by their crimes they turned away from the protector of the Temple, the arbiter of redemption.

De Excidio 5.32.1⁶⁶

As clearly as anywhere else in the work, here Ps-Hegesippus expostulates a theory of historical causality and his summative judgment of Jewish history: The *Iudaei* came to a final end because they rejected and crucified Jesus. At the same time, Ps-Hegesippus presents a kind of genealogy of Jewish *perfidia*, tracing the motif of murder back into the Jewish past. For Ps-Hegesippus, when the *Iudaei* killed Jesus, this was not a one-off event; rather, it was something characteristic of the *Iudaei*. The *Iudaei* did not “happen to” kill Jesus; for Ps-Hegesippus, killing their own people, killing prophets, was what the *Iudaei* did. Hence the rhetorical question: *Quando enim suos non occiderunt Iudaei?*⁶⁷ The presumed answer is: never, the *Iudaei* had *always* killed their own.

De Excidio’s argument is driven by *exempla*. Ps-Hegesippus traces Jewish killing back to two historical episodes: (1) the death of Saul’s son Ish-Bosheth at the hands of two of his captains (2 Sam 4:5–8) and (2) Naboth’s murder by Jezebel on Ahab’s behalf (1 Kings 21). But wait: Why does Ps-Hegesippus not call these figures *Hebraei*? They belong to the era hearkened by that term elsewhere in *De Excidio*. I suggest that, for Ps-Hegesippus, the ethical divide between *Hebraei* and *Iudaei* here trumps the chronological distinction. In *De Excidio* 5.32 *perfidia* emerges as a *Jewish* trait, epitomized in the killing of Jesus Christ. Ps-Hegesippus traces back the roots of a “Jewish” habit that previously existed among a people who in other contexts are referred to collectively as *Hebraei*. Interestingly, at 5.32 one can read the line *Iudaea fuit Iezabel, quae ... Iudaeus Achab, qui ...* either as “It was the Jewess Jezabel who ... and Ahab the Jew who ...” or as “Jezabel was a

⁶⁶ CSEL 66.1: 373. Saul’s son = Ishbosheth (2 Sam 4).

⁶⁷ Echoing Acts 7:52a: “Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?” Cf. Luke 11:47; 1 Thess 2:15.

Jewess, who ... and Ahab was a Jew, who ...” Either way, they are identified as Jewess and Jew explicitly. It is very unusual, and therefore telling, for Ps-Hegesippus to refer to characters of such vintage as *Iudaei*. It implies that “Jewish” impulses and people had existed in “Hebrew” antiquity, a bad Jewish seed among pristine Hebrew origins.⁶⁸

The overall picture of the *Iudaei* in *De Excidio* is one of moral dilapidation, divine rejection, and historical tragedy.⁶⁹ For Ps-Hegesippus, the Jews are violent, senseless, untrustworthy, impious as a group. The *Hebraei*, on the other hand, represent the heroic *exempla* of an ancient past, a golden age populated by virtuous heroes. As such, they strike a considerable contrast to the *Iudaei* whose ignominious end (in 70 CE) *De Excidio* is concerned to narrate. Still, the two groups are clearly related and at times even conflated. Ps-Hegesippus’ Hebrew/Jew distinction is not unremittingly lucid: At times it founders upon the vagaries so common within identity (and alterity) discourses. Todd Berzon has identified Christian anti-Jewish discourse in late antiquity as a milieu particularly plagued by inconsistent and inchoate arguments.⁷⁰ And indeed, when we

⁶⁸ In addition to *Hebraeus* and *Iudaeus*, Ps-Hegesippus uses the ethnic term *Israhelitus*, though only once: At *De Excidio* 2.1.4 (CSEL 66.1: 133), where Caesar has just named Archelaus *rector* of Judea with the promise of *regnum* if he can keep things in check, Ps-Hegesippus adds the note: “For already there were being reported attempts at secession by the Israelite populace” (*Iam enim tentamenta discessionis Israhelitae populi nuntiabantur*). Cf. Josephus *War* 2.93–99, where no such term appears. This is not the only time that Hebrews, Jews, or Israelites are referred to as a *populus*, however; Ps-Hegesippus speaks of the *Iudaei* often as a *populus* (e.g., *populus Iudaeorum* at 5.16.1), as he also refers to other people (e.g., Romans at 4.26.1). *Plebs* is likewise a common designation within *De Excidio*.

⁶⁹ *Iudaei* are not always and everywhere demeaned in *De Excidio*: At 5.27 Titus maintains that “A Jew (*Iudaeus*) often runs out into the middle of the Roman lines and throws himself fearlessly into the enemy divisions not in hope of victory, but as a manifestation of bravery and a display for renown” (CSEL 66.1: 363). Jewish bravery in battle is a refrain that appears regularly within *De Excidio*, as it does in Josephus, but the theme is ambivalent. Elsewhere Titus will characterize the Jews as prone to trickery and deceit in war, due to their lack of strength (5.7.1): “Nor is it surprising that the Jews should devise treacheries (*Nec mirum si Iudaei dolos intexant*), for those who judge themselves unequal in strength employ tricks. But even as it is for the weaker to rely upon deceit, so it is for the stronger to beware lest deceit dupe bravery” (CSEL 66.1: 307). Moreover, certain Hebrew heroes are identified with *Iudaei* in places: for example, at 5.2.1, where Elisha’s supernatural intervention is said to have resulted in “[the] *Iudaeus* evading destruction” (“the Jew/Judean” taken as a *pars pro toto*). Even if the *Iudaei* are a problem people through *De Excidio*, *Iudaeus* need not convey “badness” per se. Cf. the term’s neutral explanatory function at 2.8.1, the first of only four places in *De Excidio* in which the nominative singular *Iudaeus* appears (also at 5.2.1; 5.27.1; 5.32.1).

⁷⁰ Berzon 2015.

look out across the Christian literary landscape of late antiquity, we find Ps-Hegesippus' discourse of Hebrew versus Jew, pointed yet problematic, to be in good company among his Christian peers.

HEBREW AND JEWISH IDENTITY IN LATE ANTIQUITY CHRISTIAN ETHNOGRAPHY

Christians of late antiquity had a lot to say about Hebrews, and Jews, and very often about the space in between. (Modern scholars have had no less to say about these self-proclaimed Christian pundits.) Ps-Hegesippus aligns with much, but not all, ancient Christian thought in distinguishing *Hebraeus* from *Iudaeus* even while allowing a historical, genealogical connection.

Some of the earliest “Christian” literature – that is, the Pauline corpus – uses the terms Ἑβραῖος and Ἰσραήλ alongside the more common Ἰουδαῖος.⁷¹ However, it is arguable that Eusebius of Caesarea was the first Christian author to articulate a decisive distinction between Hebrew and Jew.⁷² Aaron Johnson has framed Eusebius' differentiation within the apologetic historiography of the *Preparation of the Gospel* in terms of what he has called “ethnic argumentation.”⁷³ Already at the beginning of the fourth century, and right at the dawn of Christian historiography proper (usually associated with Eusebius), then, “Hebrew” and “Jew” had been established as important categories to be contradistinguished and deployed within the Christian historicizing of Jewish identity. Such differentiation was more than simple terminological dichotomy: It posited definite categories that had the effect of unhitching Jewishness from the Hebrew past per se, thus making way for the newfound heirs of the empire, the Christians, to claim the august antiquity of the Jews' one-time ancestors.⁷⁴ Christian parsing between Hebrew and Jew was not a disinterested enterprise. It was the consummation of an emergent habit of Christian supersessionism and a manifestation of Christian angst concerning Jewish identity and its claim to ancient (and biblical) moorings. Christianity's most prominent

⁷¹ Phil 3:5. See Miller 2010. The Pauline writings might properly be called “proto-Christian.”

⁷² Otto 2018, 136: “Eusebius is ... the first to articulate a sharp distinction between the terms *Hebraios* and *Ioudaios*, reifying the semantic distinction already imperceptible, if not fully developed, in the writings of Clement and Origen.” Cf. Parkes 1964, 71.

⁷³ Johnson 2006, vii: “the concern to strategically formulate ethnic identities as the basis for an apologetic argument.”

⁷⁴ See Jacobs 2004, 29–31; Kofsky 2000, 98–103; Ulrich 1999, 57–131.

critics, by the way, often objected to this perceived one-upmanship, ratifying Hebrew filiation to the Jews, and *not* to the Christians.⁷⁵

While Eusebius and Ps-Hegesippus share an interest in denigrating Jewishness while preserving Hebrew nobility, they do not mark the Hebrew–Jew divide at the same historical place. Eusebius famously located the chasm early on, with the generation that received the law under Moses marking the departure from their earlier, more pristine ancestors. Ps-Hegesippus, as we have seen, is somewhat inconsistent in locating a chronological divide; when such a divide does appear in *De Excidio*, it appears in later eras, whether under David’s rule or following the Assyrian or Babylonian captivities, or even extending to Hasmonean times (second–first centuries BCE). An even more fundamental difference between Eusebius and Ps-Hegesippus is the literary genres in which each respectively maps this ethnographic borderline. The entirety of Eusebius’ historiographical corpus, whether his *Preparation of the Gospel* or *Demonstration of the Gospel* or *Church History* or *Chronicle*, is written with Christians as an explicit and crucial part of the narrative.⁷⁶ Ps-Hegesippus’ classicizing narrative is a history of the Jews. It assumes a less in-group, apologetic function for Christianity, at least on the surface. It is conceivable that a non-Christian reader could have picked up *De Excidio* and apprehended its ethnographic treatment of Hebrews and Jews without necessarily engaging, or even understanding, its Christian theology and ideology. It is hardly imaginable that this could have happened with Eusebius’ writings.

As historians, Eusebius and Ps-Hegesippus both embody the practice of Christian ethnography. If the specific contents and also the packaging of their treatments differ significantly, they agree upon the utility of distinguishing Hebrews from Jews. This general discourse was to carry over to later Christian historians as well.⁷⁷ Nor was this trend restricted to the genre(s) of history-writing. The prizing apart of Hebrew and Jewish identity was a Christian task to which many late antique authors put their hands. We encounter this exercise across genres, regions, and languages. In Greek, Epiphanius of Cyprus makes such a distinction

⁷⁵ I have in mind here Porphyry (*Contra Christianos* frags. 343–46; see Johnson 2013, 47–48, 277, 320) and Julian (whose *Contra Galilaeos* may be fairly summarized as being dedicated to just this theme; see Finkelstein 2018, 50 *et passim*). Celsus, for his part, was largely okay with associating the Christians and the Jews with the Hebrews, all of whom he painted as unsophisticated barbarian dolts (see *Contra Celsum* 1.14–18 and throughout, with Schott 2008, 46–47 *et alibi*).

⁷⁶ DeVore 2021 argues that Eusebius’ *Hist. Eccl.* contains three distinct periodizations, the first of which is “soteriological” and marks Christ’s Incarnation as the point at which God made a “total break” with his previous people, the Jews, displaced by Christians.

⁷⁷ E.g., Sozomen in his *Hist. Eccl.* (in contradistinction to Socrates); Urbainczyk 1997, 365.

in his great work of heresiology, the *Medicine Chest* (4.7.5).⁷⁸ It also appears in John Chrysostom's *Discourses against Judaizing Christians* (2.2; 3.2), delivered in Antioch in 386–387 CE, in conversation with the apostle Paul (Phil 3:6). On the Syriac side, Christine Shepardson has shown how Ephrem cleaves “a distinct division between Jews, the descendants of the idolaters at Sinai, and Christians, the descendants of Moses, and heirs of God's covenant with Israel.”⁷⁹ Ephrem's Hebrew/Jew divide maps more or less onto Eusebius' Sinai chronology. As for Christian Latinity, the early influential apologist Tertullian in the second century,⁸⁰ the partially preserved *Disputation of Jason and Papiscus* in the third century,⁸¹ and then a number of important Christian authors in the fourth century, including Lactantius and Ambrose,⁸² and later

⁷⁸ Kim 2015, 77.

⁷⁹ Shepardson 2008, 90 (further 69–105).

⁸⁰ Tertullian, in his *Apology*, mentions in passing that those now called Jews were previously Hebrews (*Hebraei retro, qui nunc Iudaei*), their position as *gens dei* having been inherited *ex patrum gratia* (*Apologia* 18.29–30). See further *Adversus Iudaeos* 8.18, where he charges *omnis synagoga filiorum Israelis* with Jesus' death.

⁸¹ Partially preserved in Latin in a letter of Celsus Africanus: Celsus speaks of a famous debate between Jason, a Hebrew Christian (*Hebraeus Christianus*), and Papiscus, an Alexandrian Jew (*Alexandrinus Iudaeus*). In this doctrinal interchange, “the stubbornness of the Jew's mind was softened by the admonition and mild reproof of the Hebrew” (*Iudaici cordis obstinatum duritiam Hebraei admonitione*), i.e., the Christian. This third-century text betrays that quite early within Latinate Christianity the Hebrew vs. Jew question was influenced by the erstwhile interloper, “Christian.” Ps.-Cyprian, *Ad Vigilium episcopum, de Iudaica incredulitate* 8. From Rigolio 2019, 39–40.

⁸² Lactantius, who calls the Hebrews “our ancestors” (*maiores nostri*), in the *Divine Institutes* locates the Hebrew to Jew “switch” following the golden calf incident (and the giving of the Mosaic law), much like Ephrem, though he does not make the polemical idolatry connection that Ephrem does. Lactantius *Inst. Div.* 4.10 (PL 6: 470–73) speaks of “Our ancestors, who were the leaders of the Hebrews” (*Maiores nostril, qui errant principes Hebraeorum*), and then goes on to discuss how, after the golden calf incident, “God was offended against the impious and ungrateful people for this sin and disgraceful deed and afflicted them justly with grave punishment and subjected them to the Law which he had given to Moses. Later, when they had settled in a certain part of the desert of Syria, they lost the ancient name of Hebrews, and because the leader of their contest was Judas, they were called Jews and the land which they inhabited Judea” (*amiserunt uetus nomen Hebraei, et quoniam princeps examines eorum Iudas erat, Iudaei sunt appelleati, et terra, quam incolere, Iudaea*); McDonald 1964, 264–65. Cf. *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* 2.8. While Lactantius does not explicitly attach the golden calf idolatry to a Hebrew into Jew fall from grace here, the proximity of the two events is suggestive. See further Migne's “Variorum Notae” in PL 6: 472–73. Ambrose explicitly cuts the Jews out of a Hebrew to Christian lineage, stating that even as the Hebrews despoiled the Egyptians and carried away their goods, so the Christian people retain the entire spoils of the Jews, which the latter did not even know they had; Ambrose *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII* 21.12 (PL 141: 480): *Hebraei spoliauerunt Aegyptios et uasa eorum abstulerunt; Iudaeorum spolia habet populus christianus et totum habemus, quod illi habere se nesciebant*.

Jerome and Augustine,⁸³ all testify to a robust tradition of attributing different meanings to Hebrew and Jew.⁸⁴ In distinguishing Hebrews from Jews, Ps-Hegesippus joins a chorus of late ancient Christian authors.

What Ps-Hegesippus adds is a distinctively classical literary flavoring, inasmuch as *De Excidio* does not deal in doctrine, theology, and apologetic in positing this divide. Moreover, in *De Excidio* this divide is created and populated by biblical *exempla*, David and Joshua in particular, who are themselves construed in ways that often appear more classical than Christian per se.⁸⁵

HEBREW AND JEWISH IDENTITY IN HELLENISTIC JUDAISM

It is not an accident that Ps-Hegesippus finds a like-minded partner in Eusebius as a Christian author invested in categorizing Hebrew versus Jew. Both authors drank deeply from Hellenistic Jewish literature, not only in the guise of Flavius Josephus (and Philo of Alexandria), but also the Greek Jewish Scriptures themselves and the sometimes-apocryphal Books of the Maccabees.⁸⁶ Hellenistic Judaism (or Jewish Hellenism), moreover, had already gone some way toward distinguishing “Hebrew” from “Jew” (or “Judean”), as the Hebrew Scriptures had done before.

Like the Hebrew Bible, the Greek Jewish Scriptures move from speaking of “Hebrews” and/or “Israelites” to “Jews/Judeans” at the point of the Assyrian and/or Babylonian exiles (722 and 586 BCE, respectively).⁸⁷ Therefore, it is not surprising to find Josephus speaking of (mostly) Hebrews in his pre-exilic history and (mostly) Jews thereafter (Table 2.1).⁸⁸

What might come as more of a surprise is the fact that Josephus can speak of Ἰουδαῖοι, Ἑβραῖοι, and Ἰσραηλῖται interchangeably,⁸⁹ although only until we remember that Josephus’ brand of apologetic historiography was precisely built upon the notion of the Jews’ antiquity; that

⁸³ Mégier 2006, 353.

⁸⁴ Anna Aurast’s summary of somewhat later Latin literature also aptly describes late antiquity: Aurast 2012, 175–77.

⁸⁵ See further Chapter 6.

⁸⁶ See Schott 2012, 268–69; Edwards 2015, 166–68.

⁸⁷ See Harvey 1996.

⁸⁸ Consult Rengstorf 1973–1994, 2.41, 2.62–63. The Ἰσραηλῖται only ever appear in *Ant.* 2–11 (2.64–65).

⁸⁹ Spilsbury 1998, 38; Gruen 2017.

TABLE 2.1 “Hebrew” and “Jew” in *Josephus’ Jewish War and Jewish Antiquities*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<i>Antiquities</i> by book																				
Ἑβραῖος	14	54	41	34	33	44	38	23	6	8	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Occurrences																				
Ἰουδαῖος	6	0	0	1	0	8	2	2	2	8	91	86	90	115	39	24	40	62	22	58
Occurrences																				
<i>War</i> by book																				
Ἑβραῖος	1	2	3	4	5	6	7													
Occurrences																				
Ἰουδαῖος	70	118	57	23	61	70	71													
Occurrences																				

is, the time of the Hebrews/Israelites as an ancestral backdrop for Jewish identity, custom, and legitimacy.⁹⁰ For Josephus, the Hebrews are who the Jews used to be (*Ant.* 1.6), the Jews are conceptually connected to this ancient group via the persona of Moses (e.g., 1.95), and, indeed, “the Jews were originally called Hebrews” after Heber, the descendant of Shem (1.146). They became Jews “from the time they went up from Babylon” (11.173).⁹¹ Josephus took great interest in effectively collocating these two apparently different groups of divergent nomenclature.⁹² Still, Josephus’ erstwhile distinction between two closely related historical polities provided a blueprint for later Christian authors like Eusebius and Ps-Hegesippus – a blueprint these authors could exploit.

HEBREW, JEW, AND CHRISTIAN SUPERSESSIONISM IN *DE EXCIDIO*

While Christian authors like Ps-Hegesippus often leaned upon categories established within Hellenistic Jewish literature, they did not inhabit the same conceptual world as their role models. For one thing, what “Jew” meant changed between the first and fourth centuries. This is true regardless of how one is inclined to translate Ἰουδαῖος or *Iudaeus*.⁹³ Daniel Boyarin has been at the forefront of scholarship that has shown how Christians came to construct the Jewish other as a new type of category, a religious one.⁹⁴ This industry began in earnest with Ignatius of Antioch and reached its heyday in or around the fourth century. Thus, by the time *De Excidio* was written, “Jew” meant something different than what Josephus could have meant by the term Ἰουδαῖος. At the same time, Christians had now had centuries of practice appropriating the Hebrew heroes of their “Old Testament” for themselves, despite Jewish and sometimes pagan objections to the illegitimacy of their claiming such a legacy. The result was that by late antiquity, “Hebrew” and “Jew” often carried very different, even

⁹⁰ Sterling 1989.

⁹¹ See Goodman 2011, 395.

⁹² When it suited him. He could, of course, use or not use the relative “Hebrew-ness” of a given Jew/Judean at any given time to, however implicitly or explicitly, cast a person (or group) as “good” or “true” Jew(s), or not.

⁹³ Discussion of the terminology usually harks back to Mason 2007. See also Anidjar 2008; Cohen 2001.

⁹⁴ Boyarin 2004; cf. 2018; see also Reed 2018; Paget 2010; Becker and Reed 2003.

contradictory, connotations for Christians,⁹⁵ and we may assume this for Ps-Hegesippus' readers as well as for the author himself.

Perhaps what is most surprising about Ps-Hegesippus' exploitation of the Hebrew/Jew conceptual divide is how understated it is. *De Excidio*'s division of the two assumed identities is subtle. Hebrews almost never appear in the narrative. When they do, they are usually being discussed by Jewish actors as the Jews' own ancestors: Ps-Hegesippus' Hebrews often belong to an emic Jewish discourse as viewed from an etic Christian perspective. Nevertheless, as we will see as this study progresses, closer attention to the rare Hebrew heroes of *De Excidio* reveals that they have important parts to play within Ps-Hegesippus' practice of history-writing. Yet the polemical power of these biblical *exempla* is rarely if ever explicitly named within *De Excidio*. Rather, Ps-Hegesippus allows the query from his Prologue (3) to stand as an open question: Whatever happened to the *gens Hebraeorum*? Was the Hebrew to Jew lineage interrupted? Did Judah's line continue instead in the person of Jesus, the "hope of nations?" Without the vitriolic overtones of standard anti-Jewish Christian polemic, Ps-Hegesippus weaves throughout his work a subtle ethnography that speaks to his work's subjects, the Jews. Perhaps not coincidentally, Ps-Hegesippus' ethnographic division between Hebrews and Jews corresponds in its ethical thrust with a commonplace division in earlier Greco-Roman thought: the ancestors were better – Romans called theirs *maiores*, literally "the better ones" – the descendants comparatively wanting.

* * *

In this chapter we have witnessed one thing that Ps-Hegesippus does with his Hebrew heroes. By means of biblical *exempla* (*inter alia*), he holds in tension the categories of *Hebraeus* and *Iudaeus*, rendering them categories that describe groups that are similar, yet different. Joshua, David, and a host of other *Hebraei* – much as their *Iudaei* counterparts like John of Gischala, Simon bar Giora, and Eleazar ben Simon – make real the conceptual categories of Hebrew and Jew within *De Excidio*. To borrow Immanuel Kant's language, these *exempla* are for Ps-Hegesippus the precepts that give life to the concepts of "Hebrew" and "Jew." An obvious question follows from this: Why would Ps-Hegesippus want to do this? What does this ethnographic map do for *De Excidio*?

⁹⁵ With "Hebrew" sometimes being a "polite word for Jews." De Lange 1976, 29; cf. S. Drake 2013, 40.

A full answer to this question falls beyond the purview of the present conclusion. It is something we will continue to touch on throughout this work. But here we may call upon scholarship that has dealt with early Christian Empire; that is, the dynamics of the later Roman Empire following the conversion of Constantine to Christianity. Averil Cameron has exposed how the early Christian Empire produced a discourse involving the Bible, the Jews, identity, and narrative genres to wield social and ideological power.⁹⁶ In the same vein, Jeremy Schott has shown how identity discourses in Christian late antiquity appropriated – and, indeed, succeeded because of – the mechanics of Roman imperial discourse. Viewed in this context, Ps-Hegesippus’ *Hebraeus* versus *Iudaeus* discourse contributes to cultural conversations within which “Jewish identity, like Greekness, was a fluid category,” available for bending to various rhetorical ends.⁹⁷ For Christian authors, such conversations could involve creating a gap between Hebrew and Jew. This gap distances the culture heroes of the Jewish Scriptures from the manifestly ignoble, violent, self-destructive *Iudaei* who star in Ps-Hegesippus’ narrative. This gap implies space for the identity formation of the late antique Christian collective self, heir apparent to the Roman Empire and simultaneously self-described as descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – a claim to which some, like the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry, the Emperor Julian, and ostensibly the Christians’ Jewish neighbors, would vociferously object. But within such a gap they could forge for themselves a name and a claim to an ancient ancestral past. Ps-Hegesippus’ Hebrew versus Jew distinction stands as a subtle hint toward this broader cultural phenomenon.

⁹⁶ Cameron 1991, esp. 1–4, 6–7, and 89ff.

⁹⁷ Schott 2008, 6, 166, dubbing such discourses “both *constituted by* and *constitutive of* Roman imperialism.” See also 5–9 and 149–54.

Abraham, Ethnography, Exemplarity, and Oratory at *De Excidio* 5.41.2 and 5.53.1

In [Chapter 2](#), we saw how *De Excidio* implicates biblical *exempla* in a particular kind of identity categorization. We noticed that Ps-Hegesippus evinces what Todd Berzon has called the “ethnographic disposition,” something that “encapsulates the literary process and effects of writing peoples and defining cultural systems.”¹ But Ps-Hegesippus’ ethnographic impulses do not restrict themselves to peopling broader identity maps upon which *Hebraei* and *Iudaei* appear as separate but similar. He also asks much more pointed, much more profound questions about Jewish identity by means of biblical *exempla*. In particular, the patriarch Abraham, along with an ancient Israelite judge (Jephthah) and king (Josiah) and several others, serve in *De Excidio* to ask and answer incisive questions integrating Jewish history, tradition, and disposition. These are the kinds of ethnic questions classical authors often posed in their writing, especially history-writing, and sometimes in their character speeches.

To be more specific: In *De Excidio*, Abraham comes to be used in contrastive ways as an originary figure embodying some ethnic essence of the Hebrews and/or the Jews. Annette Reed has already shown how, for early Jewish texts, Roman exemplarity provides a helpful framework within which to view the construction (and subversion) of Abraham as a foundational figure.² In a similar vein, Abraham provided a particularly useful and malleable *exemplum* for negotiating “Jewishness” in *De Excidio*. This rhetorical phenomenon appears in Titus’ speech at

¹ Berzon 2016, 36–37.

² Reed 2009, 195–203; also Spilsbury 1998, 62; Feldman 1998a, 223–89. Cf. Josephus War 5.375; *Ant.* 1.148–256; 2.212–16.

De Excidio 5.41.2 and Eleazar's speech at 5.53.1.³ The discussions of which Abraham forms an integral part in these twin contexts remind us of part of the utility of scripted speeches within ancient historiography. Historians could use character speeches "to think with," to muse over, by articulating positions on, various topics and perspectives germane to a particular cultural location or rhetorical milieu. Whether proffering their own positions or simply evincing knowledge of current issues and debates, ancient historians could use characters to posit arguments and explain ideas. Later in this chapter we will see that Livy in particular provides a striking backdrop for *De Excidio* in this regard. Thus, in leveraging *exempla* like Abraham to do ethnography, Ps-Hegesippus is doing a rather classical thing. But this had also become a Christian thing.

It is by now well known that Christian authors of the early centuries used discourses of collective identity and peoplehood – what we call "race," "ethnicity," "nationality," and so on – to describe and define themselves and – or rather over against – others.⁴ Indeed, Christians naturally and perhaps inevitably adopted this way of establishing collective identity, even if, as Erich Gruen posits, "the ancients did not have a word for ethnicity" and "no stability holds in the vocabulary" that we associate with this and related categories.⁵ Such categories nevertheless lent themselves to differentiating the self from, and distinguishing between, various others. And Christians needed this. The late antique industry of Christian heresiology is redolent of such rhetoric. Ps-Hegesippus fits into this milieu. A survey of *De Excidio*'s employment of identity terms like *barbarus*, *familia*, *genus*, *gens/gentes*, *natio/nationes*, *patria*, and *stirps* – beyond the scope of this chapter – would reveal that the people whom Ps-Hegesippus describes with these terms, and what he says about them, aligns more with Latin authors like Livy and Julius Caesar than with most late ancient Christian authors. Ps-Hegesippus' discourse of ethnography is what we might term "classical" in many ways. Still, the ethnographic discourse fueled by Abraham *et alia* in *De Excidio* touches precisely on topics of interest to ancient Christians per se. This chapter shows that, in *De Excidio*, Abraham and others drive an ethnographic

³ The speeches in Josephus' *War* corresponding to *De Excidio* 5.41.2 (*War* 6.214–19) and 5.53.1 (*War* 7.320–88) contain sentiments replicated by Ps-Hegesippus, but Ps-Hegesippus carries them much further than Josephus, mostly notably in his insertion of biblical *exempla*. *De Excidio* 5.41.2 changes "ten lines of indirect discourse in the Greek to ninety lines of direct statement in Latin" (Bell 1977, 139; also 132, 156).

⁴ See, e.g., Berzon 2018; Buell 2008; Byron 2002; Johnson 2006.

⁵ Gruen 2013, 1.

discourse that is classical in conception yet Christian in content. In showing this, I argue that Ps-Hegesippus uses biblical *exempla* to muse over the question: “What are Jews like?”

QUALIS ISTA GENS? TITUS ON ABRAHAM (DE EXCIDIO 5.41.2)

At *De Excidio* 5.41, Titus delivers a speech following what must be the most horrendous scene of the Roman–Jewish War as narrated by Josephus or Ps-Hegesippus (which is saying a lot): that is, he speaks in the wake of the infamous “Maria Story” (*De Excidio* 5.40; cf. Josephus *War* 6.201–13), wherein a woman besieged within Jerusalem, starved into dementia, kills, cooks, and eats her infant son.⁶ Immediately, Titus calls inhumanity and disowns responsibility for the ordeal:

Upon hearing this, Caesar cursed the contagion of the unhappy country and, lifting his hands to heaven, declared as follows: “Certainly we have come for war, but we have not fought with men. Against the utter madness of monsters and wild animals, what sensible thing could I say? We have railed in judgment against all the sheer apathy of rocks. Wild animals care for their young, and likewise feed them when they are hungry, and while they feed on the bodies of some other (kinds of animals), they keep away from the corpses of animals like themselves. This is beyond the harshest thing imaginable, that a mother should devour the limbs to which she gave birth. I, blameless, declare myself innocent before you of this contagion, whatever power you are who exists in heaven. You know, surely you know that I have constantly offered peace from heartfelt compassion, and that I have requested that which does not shame a conqueror to say, that I have wanted to spare even the authors of such omens themselves, to spare the people, to preserve the city.”

De Excidio 5.41.2⁷

In an unlikely prayer to “whatever power you are who exists in heaven” (*quaecumque in caelo potestas es*), Titus contemplates Maria’s deed ruefully and with incredulity. He exonerates himself, presents the country of Judea as a diseased place that needs to be destroyed, and compares the Jews to rocks and animals in their unfeeling insistence on resisting Rome, which is what (for Titus) has created all the death and suffering at hand.

Eventually, Titus’ “thinking out loud” leads him to a more fundamental question about those opposing him and, by proxy, the Jews writ large:

⁶ See Bay 2022 generally, and 84–88 for a full text, translation, and brief discussion of Titus’ speech here.

⁷ CSEL 66.1: 384–85.

What kind of people are these, what is the remedy for such enemies? Indeed, I had heard that the savageness of this people was intolerable, who excite themselves to such insolence because of their extraordinary beliefs: namely that their birth draws them out of heaven, where they first take on bodily form; that they previously were residents of heaven, who came down for the purpose of cultivating the earth, and who then return from earth to heaven; that they passed through the dried up sea on foot, that the waves of the sea fled before them, and that the reversed flow of the Jordan turned back toward its source; that the sun stood still so that they might at that time conquer their enemies, lest the night impede them; that they are taken off into heaven in fiery chariots; that the powers of heaven have fought on their behalf, that the entire force of their enemy was dispersed in their absence, and that victory was achieved while they were sleeping.

De Excidio 5.41.2⁸

Titus' question here – *Quales sunt ciues ...?* – may refer to those with whom he is immediately confronted (inhabitants of Jerusalem, warring Jewish factions). But the question inevitably leads the reader of *De Excidio* to consider the *Iudaei* on the whole. Titus then pursues this very question: His subsequent speech expands to encompass the *gens* tout court.

The nouns (*rabies*, *ferocitas*, *insolentia*) with which Titus leads in describing the Jewish *genus/gens* sound incredibly realistic as words spoken by a Roman general or emperor about a subject people against whom he is warring. Indeed, the vocabulary is so powerfully reminiscent of Roman antiquity because it is exactly the vocabulary earlier Latin historians used to describe troublesome, local peoples often at war with Rome. Interestingly, and perhaps unrealistically, Titus attaches the Jews' presumptuous self-assertiveness to a version of Jewish dogma: First, he states that they believe themselves to be a kind (*genus*) of people who formerly existed bodily in heaven, descended to take care of the earth (*ad cultus terrarum*), and will return again *ad caelum*.⁹ This Roman take on Jewish doctrine may correspond to 2 Macc 7:9–11 (or 4 Macc), but could also be seen to resonate with an incomplete understanding of other biblical passages¹⁰ and with ideas found in Philo of Alexandria.¹¹ More easily located are the Red Sea event (Exod 14:21–22; Heb 11:29) and the stopping-up of the waters of the Jordan (Josh 3:16),¹² the two great aquatic miracles of Jewish antiquity, to which Titus next makes

⁸ CSEL 66.1: 385.

⁹ A notion found in Heb 11:29 (CSEL 66.1: 385).

¹⁰ E.g., Gen 2:5, 15; 3:23; 6:1–4; 2 Kgs 2:11; Ps 139:16; Isa 43:1, 7, 21.

¹¹ Philo *De opificio mundi* 10.36–37, 18.55, 22ff; *De confusione linguarum* 17.77–78; cf. *De migratione Abraham* 33.184; *De specialibus legibus* 1.38.107.

¹² On the latter: Ambrose *Ep. Ext. Coll.* 15.7; Ps 113:3; Somenzi 2009, 121.

reference.¹³ Thereafter Titus alludes to the story of the sun standing still in Israel's fight against the Amorites (Josh 10:13),¹⁴ to Elijah's being swept up into heaven by a fiery chariot (2 Kgs 2:11), and either to the narrative of 2 Kgs 7 wherein God puts the Arameans to flight, or to that of 2 Kgs 18–19 where God's angel destroys an Assyrian army.¹⁵ Titus refers to all of these “extraordinary beliefs” (*incredibiles opiniones*) and stories as things he had “discovered” (*haec conpereram*). From them, Titus concludes that such a cosmic self-understanding and self-conscious history of divine protection produced Jewish *insolentia*; that is, an assumption of victory, an audacious persistence, and an unwillingness to compromise.

We can see here already that the conception of the Jews given to Titus by Ps-Hegesippus draws almost exclusively on narratives from the Jewish Bible, presented as undergirding Jewish dogma. Titus underscores his conclusion that the Jews think it “impossible that they should be defeated by the Romans” and “believe themselves insuperable” with a further list of aspects of Jewish tradition:

These things I discovered, but I used to think that they [only] boasted of the divine blessings surrounding them, not that they would compound their audacity in every direction, so that they thought it impossible that they should be defeated by the Romans. Accordingly, I understand that there is a battle between us and these, who believe themselves insuperable, who boast themselves to be survivors of the deluge, heirs of the flood, sojourners of the earth, travelers of the sea, ascenders of the sky, for whom the wave is a wall, the air a road, heaven a home, whom neither flames can burn nor chains restrain. The rock was loosened and poured itself as a drink to those who thirsted; heaven was opened to those who were hungry and food was sent; the camp was filled with the meat of birds, and man ate the bread of angels. Waters were held back, the bitter was made sweet, the sun stood still, darkness was illuminated.

De Excidio 5.41.2¹⁶

Titus cites as facets of Jewish self-identification the “national” survival of the flood narrative (Gen 6–9), the idea – associated with Abraham – of being “sojourners on the earth” (*hospites terrarum*),¹⁷ again the notions of traveling through the sea (Exod 14) and ascent into the sky (2 Kgs 2),

¹³ Cf. Josh 4:23; *Targum to the Song of Songs* 3:6.

¹⁴ Josh 10:13 lists another source containing this story: the “Book of Jashar.”

¹⁵ According to Somenzi 2009, 112, it is the latter.

¹⁶ *De Excidio* 5.41.2 (CSEL 66.1: 385–86).

¹⁷ At Gen 23:4 Abraham calls himself a sojourner and foreigner in the land of the Hittites. Cf. Heb 11, where Abraham appears amid a host of *exempla* collectively described as “sojourners and exiles on the earth” (Vulg Heb 11:13: *peregrini et hospites sunt supra terram*). Cf. also Eph 2:12, 19.

and now the idea of heaven as one's rightful home and the inability to be burned or restrained by chains. These latter points again hearken to 2 Macc 7 and 4 Macc in particular, though they also resonate with Isa 43:2, the Book of Daniel (3:19–26), and perhaps most poignantly with early Christian ideas found in several New Testament texts.¹⁸ To these Titus adds mention of the water from the rock story (Exod 17),¹⁹ the accounts of the miraculous provision of manna in the wilderness (Exod 16; Num 11),²⁰ and, amid repeats of the waters of the Red Sea and sun standing still miracles, Titus recites the tradition of “the bitter made sweet” (*amara dulcescunt*) and “darkness [being] illuminated” (*tenebrae inluminantur*), references to miracles recorded in Exod 15:22–23 and (it seems) Exod 14:19–20, respectively. In *De Excidio*, Titus has an impressive knowledge of Jewish history and culture.

For Ps-Hegesippus, imputing such unlikely knowledge to Titus allows him to exhibit his own arsenal of knowledge while imagining a first-century Roman perspective on Jewish identity and culture and its response to perpetual Jewish resistance. It also allows Ps-Hegesippus himself, perhaps, to explore critiques of the Jewish scriptural heritage into more critical places than his own Christian perspective might willingly go.

The apogee of explanations for how the Jews could be so confident against Rome comes with Titus' assertion that they are rumored to have experienced resurrection from the dead.²¹ This picture of Titus as an outsider informed about the Jews²² comports with his polytheistic articulation of a “common opinion” (*opinio frequens*) with which Ps-Hegesippus half agrees: namely, that the Jews (here *hos homines*) had “conspired against the gods” and that their “punishment is the proof” (*poena indicio est*).²³ Titus is made to understand this punishment in terms of the

¹⁸ The idea of heaven as a home may be found in 2 Cor 5:1, 6, 8. The idea of escaping chains (also a feature of the Dan 3 narrative) is famous from Peter's angelically arranged escape from prison in Acts 12:7.

¹⁹ See also Neh 9:15; Isa 48:21.

²⁰ See also Deut 8:3, 16; Josh 5:12; Neh 9:20; John 6:31.

²¹ *De Excidio* 5.41.2 (CSEL 66.1: 386): “Finally, who could possibly be greater, or how could audacity possibly be absent from these who, as they say, having died, live, and having been buried, are resuscitated?” Though more commonly associated with Christian thought today, Jewish tradition does contain accounts of resurrection from the dead: e.g., 2 Kgs 4:20–37; Ezek 37:5–6; cf. John 11–12. Still, might Ps-Hegesippus imagine Titus here referencing the rumor of Jesus' resurrection and imputing it to the Jews?

²² For what the Romans knew and thought about Jews, consult Stern 1974.

²³ *De Excidio* 5.41.2 (CSEL 66.1: 386): “It is also a common opinion that these men conspired against the gods, and their punishment is the proof.”

literal devastation of the Judean region (a ruined earth, the *Dead Sea*), the land's "turning on" its inhabitants, and the thorough breakdown of *pietas* and *religio* expressed in the tragic dissolution of even the most intimate filial relationships (e.g., mother-child).²⁴ This brings Titus full circle, back to the Maria tragedy. And here he poses a question cognate to his *qualis sunt ciues*? query mentioned earlier; this time he enlists the great Hebrew patriarch Abraham as *exemplum* par excellence to drive his discussion of "what kind of people" the Jews are.

After again mentioning Maria's unthinkable deed and the horrors of parricide among the Jews, Ps-Hegesippus has Titus turn his gaze to this wretched race's ancient ancestors:

But what new thing am I arguing, when the beginnings of her own race are reckoned from a familial parricide, with Abraham himself, whom they call their father and the author of their way of life and the originator of their worship, in whom they insist there was faith to the greatest degree, because he did not think to have mercy on his son and brought him forward to the altar as a sacrifice and did not hesitate to offer him as a burnt offering? I do not condemn his zeal, but I question his piety.

De Excidio 5.41.2²⁵

Here, at last, Abraham comes to occupy center stage in Titus' post-traumatic ethnography of the Jews, whose destruction and degradation he is witnessing. And the rhetoric is startling. Titus basically says that one ought not be surprised at Maria's deed, because such a thing is not *nouum* among this people; rather, the "beginnings of their race" (*generis sui ... exordia*) stem from a "fraternal parricide" (*parricidio fraterno*).²⁶ Titus refers to the famous Akedah of Abraham (Gen 22), whom (he says) the Jews call their *pater* and *auctor disciplinae* and *princeps sui cultus*.²⁷ At this point Titus takes moral exception to Jewish tradition, challenging the *mos maiorum* of the Jews: Abraham's imputed *fides* comes from

²⁴ See again Bay 2022, 84–88.

²⁵ CSEL 66.1: 387: *Sed quid quasi nouum arguo, cum a parricidio fraterno generis sui numerent exordia, cum ipsius Abrahæ, quem appellant patrem et disciplinae auctorem ac sui principem cultus, in eo maxime fidem praedicent, quod nec filio parcendum putauerit eumque sicut hostiam aris admouerit atque holocaustum offerre non dubitauerit? Non condemnno deuotionem sed quaero pietatem.*

²⁶ This could just as easily refer to the Cain and Abel narrative of Gen 4.

²⁷ Cf. Tacitus *Hist.* 5.4.1, which states that Moses established (*indidit*) for his *gens* "novel rites contrary to those of other peoples" (*nouos ritus contrariosque ceteris mortalibus*). Relying upon this passage, a later *scholion* on Juvenal's *Satire* 14.96–106 (at 14.102) calls Moses "priest or king of his race, or the very inventor of their *religio*" (*sacerdos uel rex eius gentis, aut ipsius quidem religionis inuentor*). See Wessner 1931, 215.

his willingness to slaughter and sacrifice his son.²⁸ This, Titus states in a laconic Latin phrase, evinces a surfeit of zeal but a dearth of piety: *Non condemno deuotionem sed quaero pietatem*.²⁹ Titus poses as a sophisticated interpreter of cultures. He has no problem with Abraham's willingness to take radical steps on behalf of divinity; but he does have qualms with idealizing Abraham's *pietas*. Is Ps-Hegesippus leveling a critique at Jewish origins by means of Titus? The other contexts in which Abraham appears in *De Excidio* present the laudatory picture of the biblical hero one would expect from a Christian author.³⁰ I suggest, then, that Titus' Abraham-based ethnography does not necessarily mirror Ps-Hegesippus' own critique of Jewishness; rather, it is a realistic depiction of a Roman response to Jewish tradition in the face of apparent cultural collapse among the Jews.

As a complement to the point Titus made (*arguo*) regarding Abraham, Ps-Hegesippus has him recall another, lesser-known Jewish tradition:

And they say that another of them, having been victorious in battle, vowed that whatever should first come out of his house upon his return he would sacrifice to his god, and that, when he returned, his daughter came out and he laid hands on his daughter; and there are many other examples of this kind. What kind of race is this, which allows for murdering people in the name of *religio* and considers parricide to be sacrifice? What god would be able to demand this, or what kind of priest is there that would be able to carry it out? Finally, they say that this man of old, as if he were too prudent, did not do this thing, but rather was willing to do it; and the other adhered [to his vow] strictly, as if he were too stupid [not to].

De Excidio 5.41.2³¹

The reference is to the tragic story of Jephthah from the Book of Judges. After serving as a "judge" who delivered Israel, at Judg 11:30 Jephthah made a tragic vow: He "vowed to the LORD," pending his victory, the first thing to come out of his house upon his return home. This first thing ended up being his only daughter, who greeted him upon his return with dancing (Judg 11:34). With great remorse, Jephthah fulfilled his

²⁸ Philo stresses Abraham's willingness as an important interpretive component of the episode (*Abr.* 186).

²⁹ Contrarily, in Philo (*Abr.* 60) Abraham is presented as an *exemplum* precisely because of his "zeal for piety" (εὐσεβείας ... ζηλώτης), which Philo calls "the highest and greatest of virtues" (ἀρετῆς τῆς ἀνατάτω καὶ μεγίστης). See Reed 2009, 193, and cf. Josephus *Ant.* 2.196. Ps-Hegesippus' discussion of *uirtus*, *pietas*, and *deuotio* has striking similarities to Philo's portrayal of Abraham.

³⁰ See *De Excidio* 3.17.1; 4.23.2; 5.16.1.

³¹ CSEL 66.1. Cyrill Ackermann has rightly pointed out to me that *deo suo* in the first line may signal a distance between Titus and his (assumed) gods and the *deus* of Jephthah.

vow (11:35–40). Subsequent interpreters debated the precise nature of that fulfillment: Did Jephthah slaughter his daughter as a sacrifice, or did she merely remain a virgin all of her days?³² Obviously, Titus knew the former version.³³

In addition to Abraham and Jephthah, Titus avers that “there are many other *exempla* of this kind” (*multaque alia huiusmodi exempla*) from Jewish antiquity. This leads Titus to his speech’s essential and essentializing question: “What kind of race is this (*qualis ista gens*)?” Titus construes this question in terms of ritual and *religio*: What type of *gens* sanctions murder in the name of *religio* or “considers parricide to be sacrifice” (*sacrificium putet esse parricidium*)? The question is rhetorical, the answer implicit: to wit, “unthinkably savage people, that’s who.” This leads Titus to muse over the divinity and priest(hood) that would have to represent such a people: “What god” (*quis deus*) and “what kind of priest” (*qualis sacerdos*) could explain such an unthinkable culture? Interestingly, however, in making further mention of Abraham and Jephthah, Titus betrays cognizance of a mitigating factor within each tradition: A tradition exists (*aiunt*) that that (former) “man of old” (*vet-erem illum*; i.e., Abraham) did not *actually* kill his son but was only *will-ing* to do so;³⁴ likewise, tradition holds that it was out of ignorance that Jephthah understood himself to be held by a strict, literal interpretation of his vow. But this does not exonerate the Jews; these are objections to be anticipated and dismissed.³⁵

These two *exempla*, Abraham and Jephthah, are for Titus’ character cognate illustrations of the kind of people the Jews must be. The point that the two traditions make speaks for itself: Both Abraham and Jephthah are held to have killed (or been willing to kill) their own innocent children as sacrifices. Roman *mores* usually frowned upon child and human sacrifice as morally reprehensible.³⁶ Indeed, such practices

³² She spent two months in the mountains “weeping for her virginity” after being told of the vow (Judg 11:39); when Jephthah “did with her according to his vow that he had made,” it is said that “she had never known a man.”

³³ On Ps-Hegesippus’ Abraham–Jephthah *synkrisis*, see Ambrosiaster (*Quaestiones* 63) and Somenzi 2009, 118.

³⁴ Compare Gen 22:1–14 with Josephus *Ant.* 1.223–34, and see Huizenga 2010.

³⁵ On *praemunitio*, the oratorical ability to foresee and forestall potential objections to one’s argument, see Cicero *Pro Caelio* 3–50; *De oratore* 3.53.204; *Orator ad Brutum* 40.137; Quintilian *Inst.* 9.1.30; 9.1.43; 9.2.2; 9.2.16–17.

³⁶ Livy 22.57.2–7; Ammianus Marcellinus 22.8.34; Davies 2004, 68, 247. However, cf. Valerius Maximus 6.1.2–3. On the pagan accusation of Jews practicing human sacrifice, see Rinaldi 1998, 174.

held ethnographic utility in demonstrating the abject backwardness and barbarity of the most uncultivated peoples (including, eventually, Christians).³⁷ Titus hardly needs in his speech to explain the problem he has with the figures he has named – citing their putative deeds is enough. But Titus does, at the end of his speech, adjudge Abraham and Jephthah via a Roman cultural ethics embodied in formal tragedy. This helps him bring the speech back to the *nefas* of Maria, to connect present horror, ancient tradition, and essentialized identity within his racial-ethnic discourse on the Jews.

After passing moral judgment on Abraham and Jephthah, linking their legendary actions to the Jewish race as a whole, and then preempting objections to the conclusions of his essentializing discourse, Titus returns again to an explicit stereotype founded on tradition:

They may have their sacred rites; yet for all this they are unfeeling men, with whom it is standard practice to kill children, an unhappy people, among whom exists such an industry, such a ministry. May their own ruins cover it and hide it, lest the sun look upon the disease of the earth itself, lest the sphere of stars behold it; lest the breeze of the wind be defiled, and that cleansing fire arise. We used to consider the Thyestean meal to be a fable; [but] we have seen a disgraceful thing, we have witnessed a truth more horrible than the tragedies. For there it was someone of the stronger sex and distinct from those [body] parts [which were cooked/eaten], here a woman, to whom a part of herself became food. There it was a foreign fraud, here one's own free-will. He suffered, she scoffed. It is fitting food for such men who, by their obstinate fighting, brought their own women to such a meal. In any case, I see that those plagued with such bitter evils are out of their minds and [those] who are insensitive to these things have had their consciences made useless. For this reason let us prepare quickly for war. Because they are incapable of being helped, let us fall upon them quickly, so that we may flee the dying waters of these regions, and the sinking earth.

De Excidio 5.41.2³⁸

Titus concludes from his ethnologic philosophy qua oratory that the kind of action performed by the tradition's ancient *exempla*, the kind of action embodied in Maria's *teknophagia*, is characteristic and definitive of the Jews. Despite their maintaining of *ritus*, they are *duri homines* and an *infelix ciuitas*, whose *disciplina* includes the *officinal/ministerium* of murdering children (*filios occidere*).³⁹ Titus deplores such a people,

³⁷ Isaac 2004, 474–77; Rives 1995.

³⁸ CSEL 66.1: 387–88.

³⁹ On accusations of cannibalism and child-killing leveled at Jews, Christians, and others in antiquity, see Isaac 2004, 207–11, also 215–24.

subjunctively wishing that their own ruins (*ruinae suae*) might bury the disease (*contagio*) that they represent upon the earth. Titus' language is stark: He envisions the literal burial under architectural rubble of this *gens* that, given its proclivities and practices, represents a disease of the world itself (*mundi ipsius*) from which the sun (*sol*) and universe (*stellarum globus*) ought to be shielded. The only alternative he mentions is the air itself (*aurarum spiramina*) becoming defiled, prompting cleansing fire to come upon the earth.⁴⁰ Titus concludes that the Jews are irrevocably tainted, and must be destroyed.⁴¹

Titus' valuation of the Jews returns again to Maria and her deed when he mentions his cultural metric for gauging such an event: the Roman tragedy of Thyestes. The *Thyestes*, which the Roman philosopher-author-playwright Seneca the Younger would have penned less than ten years before the fictive date of Titus' speech, was based upon a play by the same name of the great Greek tragedian Euripides. In the tragedy, Thyestes is tricked by his brother Atreus into eating his own young sons, both of whom Atreus has killed.⁴² Against this backdrop, Titus insists that in this case truth is more horrifying than fiction. He holds that "we" – that is, Romans – used to think (*putabamus*) that the "Thyestean meal" (*Thyesteas dapes*) was a *fabula*, but that now with Maria they had seen an outrage (*flagitium*) that was much worse: It was a truth (*ueritas*) more atrocious than the tragedies (*tragoediis*)! Titus provides a step-by-step comparison between the horrific *Thyestes* and the *more* horrific Maria: In the *Thyestes* a *man* ate body parts not his own, whereas Maria is a *woman* who has eaten what are effectively parts of her own body. Thyestes acted in ignorance and was pained by his actions; Maria acted voluntarily (*uoluntas*) and scoffed. Yet, as horrible as this nightmarish meal is, Titus states that it constitutes "fitting fare" (*digna esca*) for the Jews, "who, by their obstinate fighting, brought their own women to such a meal" (*qui pertinaciter bellando mulieres suas ad tale perduxerunt*

⁴⁰ A "cleansing," earth-destroying fire existed in the Roman imagination (Seneca *Naturales quaestiones* 3.13.2: *Ita ignis exitus mundi est, umor primordium*), not just within Christianity (see Luke 12:49; Acts 2:19; 2 Thess 1:8; Heb 10:27; 2 Pet 3:7, 12; Rev 8:5, 7; 9:18; 13:13; 16:8); cf. the "revolution of the ages" (περιτροπή αιώνων) at Josephus *War* 3.374. See van der Horst 1994, 227–51; cf. Josephus *Ant.* 1.70. On *contagio* and fire in *De Excidio*, see Bay 2018, 148–99.

⁴¹ On the discourse of Jewish disease in *De Excidio*, see Bay 2021b.

⁴² For the argument that Ps-Hegesippus knew and was influenced by this story, perhaps as mediated by Cicero (*Off.* 1.28.97), see Somenzi, *Egesippo – Ambrogio*, 48–49. Cf. Seneca *Ag.* 26–27; Ambrose *Hexameron libri sex* 5.7.

conuiuuium). In the Jews Titus sees (*arbitror*) a people out of their minds (*furere*), whose conscience (*mentis*) has been rendered useless (*impotes*) given that they are not affected by such horrors (*haec non sentiant*). His solution is the imperial equivalent to quarantining an infectious disease: The Jews must be destroyed, and quickly, so that the Romans can depart a land cursed, pictured as though it were literally coming apart.⁴³

So, Titus uses Abraham and Jephthah to stereotype the Jews as a dangerous, violent *gens*. A few interpretive points: First, note that a significant level of realism adheres in Titus' speech.⁴⁴ Consider: Titus' analogical association of people with animals and natural features; his utilization of ethnographic commonplaces denoting barbarity and savagery; his vague recollection of several popular and perhaps confused aspects of Jewish belief, tradition, and culture; his knowledge of Abraham (*et alia*) and popular perspectives on his "mythology"; his correlation between ancestral deeds and national character; his suspicion and criticism of foreign god(s) and priests; his reference to the Thyestean myth, a topic current in early Flavian Rome via Seneca's *Thyestes* (early 60s CE); and, finally and overall, his hyperbolic evocation of moral outrage – all of these contribute to a speech that *De Excidio*'s audience could well accept as realistic. These are the kinds of things that Titus *could have said*. Titus' speech at *De Excidio* 5.41.2 is not unbelievable; it is feasible. Even what might strike the modern reader as more fantastic components of the speech – that is, Titus' knowledge of Jewish Scriptures – are not as far-fetched as one might imagine. Abraham was not unknown in Mediterranean antiquity.⁴⁵ The Akedah may have been a particular site of popular criticism of Jewish tradition.⁴⁶

Second, Ps-Hegesippus is a Christian writer portraying a Roman general talking about the Jews. The identity discourse involved in the speech admits some hermeneutical complexity. I think it safe to say that Ps-Hegesippus is *not* using Titus as a vehicle to articulate his own ideas

⁴³ The *morientes aquas* is a nod to the Dead Sea, but the active participle gives it a present force, as does *terras ruentes*; together, they depict a region in a present state of dying and decay.

⁴⁴ Bell 1977, 131, argues that Titus' "displaying a remarkable knowledge of Jewish history ... detract[s] from his historical veracity," an anachronistic application of "veracity" to ancient historiography.

⁴⁵ Siker 1987, 188–208, and van der Horst 2010, 61–75, argue that Abraham was nevertheless not well known.

⁴⁶ Philo *Abr.* 178. For the basic association of Abraham's Akedah and Jewish tradition see Stern 1974, 2.486–87 (on Alexander of Lycopolis, 300 CE) and 1.161 (on Alexander Polyhistor, preserved by Eusebius).

verbatim (though he is using Titus as an[other] excuse to rattle off references to biblical *exempla*).⁴⁷ It is difficult to imagine a late ancient Christian author critiquing Abraham and Jephthah so trenchantly, much less questioning the legitimacy of the Jewish God and priesthood.⁴⁸ This also should probably prevent us from reading any form of censure by Ps-Hegesippus in the listing of Jewish doctrines, inasmuch as these fade into biblical legends that, again, Christians adopted for themselves. However, this does not mean that *aspects* of certain critiques or stereotypes of the Jews that *do* represent Ps-Hegesippus' thinking could not be present within the speech. Indeed, I think they are. The use of zoological analogy to stress irrationality is something that appears elsewhere in *De Excidio*. At 5.2.1 the author himself applies this analogy to Jerusalem and the Jews.⁴⁹ Further, broad condemnation of the Jews for their heedless resistance to Rome, self-destruction, and lack of *pietas*, *fides*, and *religio*, is so endemic to *De Excidio* as to define the work. When Titus speaks of these things, Ps-Hegesippus' voice may be heard in the background. Perhaps the most forceful echo of Ps-Hegesippus' thinking in Titus' speech comes in Titus' iteration of the *opinio frequens* that the Jews "had conspired against the divine" (*aduersus diuina ... conspirasse*) and that their "punishment" is "proof" thereof (*poena indicio est*). This is a position clearly held by Ps-Hegesippus, and by many other earlier and later Christian writers. Overall, Titus' speech contains Jewish censure in line with *De Excidio*'s rhetoric as well as criticism of Jewish culture unlikely to be representative of Ps-Hegesippus' thought. Conversely, at the end of *De Excidio* we find a completely different take on Abraham.

ABRAMIDAE VIRI, GENUS REGALE: ELEAZAR
ON ABRAHAM (*DE EXCIDIO* 5.53)

At *De Excidio* 5.53.1, the Jewish factional leader Eleazar ben Yair stands atop Mt. Masada as a chief of Jewish holdouts awaiting the impending Roman army. Jerusalem has been destroyed and the Jews have been all but crushed by the Romans.⁵⁰ It is not a mistake that this chapter is the

⁴⁷ Cf. *De Excidio* 5.46.

⁴⁸ Though Christians could criticize the Jewish priesthood, even this had to be done with kid gloves, given that the priesthood was scripturally mandated and a major piece of Christian *Heilsgeschichte* on almost any reckoning.

⁴⁹ At *De Excidio* 5.2.1 the Jews are likened to *muta animalia*.

⁵⁰ On the Masada event see Magness 2019.

last in *De Excidio*, whose narrative trajectory consists in effectively “writing the Jews out of history.”⁵¹ Ps-Hegesippus justifies its inclusion thus:

And so, when matters had become hopeless, Eleazar, the initiator of the revolution, seeing that no help remained, began the following speech, which we, as a kind of doleful epilogue for closing this work according to the customs of rhetoric, have not passed by.

De Excidio 5.53.1⁵²

Hereafter Ps-Hegesippus, starting from Josephus (*War* 7.320–88), inscribes a long speech by Eleazar to his Jewish compatriots, faced with such dire straits, to the effect that suicide is now their best and noblest option. Historically, Eleazar’s speech is thought to precipitate one of the most famous mass suicides in history. In Josephus’ version of the speech, Eleazar’s argument includes reference to “ancestral and divine precepts” that were “confirmed by the deeds and noble spirit of our forefathers.”⁵³ Ps-Hegesippus capitalizes upon this theme of ethnic unity and national character and gives it a face: Abraham (and Josiah). In *De Excidio*, Eleazar uses Abraham and other biblical *exempla* to give his arguments force. Thus we find again, now from a different perspective, an ethnological refrain with Abraham as its representative and the question of Jewish identity at its center. And while Eleazar’s speech has certain features in common with Titus’ at 5.41, it takes things in a very different, if not unpredictable, direction.

Eleazar begins his oration by addressing his listeners with a patronymic. Eleazar also employs, like Titus at 5.41, the concept of *religio* as an ethical analytic with ties to the patriarch:

What shall we do, men of Abraham, o royal race, unconquerable by virtue of priestly favor (*Abramidae uiri, genus regale, sacerdotalis gratiae uirtute insuperabiles*)? For virtue is not beheld from the result of victory, which is often uncertain,

⁵¹ Josephus’ *War* continues its narrative briefly thereafter, ending with a formal epilogue (7.454–55).

⁵² CSEL 66.1: 408. See [Somenzi 2009](#), 12–13.

⁵³ Josephus *War* 7.343 (LCL 210: 402–3): “For from of old, since the first dawn of intelligence, we have been continually taught by those precepts, ancestral and divine – confirmed by the deeds and noble spirit of our forefathers (οἱ πατέρι καὶ θεῷ λόγοι ... ἔργοις τε καὶ φρονήμασι τῶν ἡμετέρων προγόνων αὐτοὺς βεβαιούντων) – that life, not death, is man’s misfortune.” Eleazar later states that his listeners ought to serve as a *παράδειγμα* (the Greek equivalent of the Latin *exemplum*) for others in being ready to die (7.351), but must look to the example of other nations (τῶν ἀλλοφύλων), in this case Indians, for models. Not to rival Indian readiness for self-immolation is, Eleazar says, a reproach upon τοὺς πατέριους νόμους (7.357).

but from the displaying of perseverance. Therefore let us unite, for it is a matter of chance to cast down the enemy, but it is a matter of virtue not to change one's mind. Therefore rightly will I have called you "unconquerable," if no fear of death should overcome you here. For this is not what your father Abraham instructed you (*non ita uos pater instituit Abraham*), who by means of his only son taught that it would not result in his death but in his immortality if he should be sacrificed on behalf of *religio*.

De Excidio 5.53.1⁵⁴

By having Eleazar begin by addressing his hearers as "Abrahamidians" (*Abramidae*),⁵⁵ Ps-Hegesippus captures the nationalistic strain of the speech that already existed in Josephus' version; adding the complementary *genus regale* would suggest the language of 1 Pet 2:9 to the Christian reader,⁵⁶ perhaps betraying the Christian imagination behind Eleazar's "Jewish" discourse. Inserting the idea of insuperability on account of the priesthood may do several things: Not only does this language likewise echo 1 Pet 2:9, it also puts in a Jewish mouth the idea that the Jewish nation/people received divine blessing and protection on account of and through the priesthood (and, thus, the Temple). It also implies a deconstructive note inasmuch as Jews are censured throughout *De Excidio* for thinking themselves *insuperabiles* (and, by Eleazar's own logic, they are no longer so). Most significantly, the language with which Eleazar begins his address (*Abramidae, genus*) gives it an ethnic flavor and suggests that, just like the last time the reader encountered Abraham (in Titus' speech at 5.41.2), here also Abraham is to function as an ancient ancestor who helps define Jewish identity: racially inasmuch as he is seen as a physical ancestor of Eleazar and his compatriots (*Abramidae*), ethnically inasmuch as Abraham is said to have established Jewish practice and way of life, nationally inasmuch as Abraham is accepted and employed here as a figure significant for the *Iudaei* qua political entity. Like *De Excidio* 5.41, *De Excidio* 5.53 becomes a site of (Abrahamic) ethnography within historiographical speech-writing.

⁵⁴ CSEL 66.1: 408.

⁵⁵ Somenzi 2009, 23n63, calls this "l'appellativo prezioso, di sapore epico."

⁵⁶ 1 Pet 2:9: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (γένος ἐκλεκτόν βασιλειον ιεράτευμα ἔθνος ἅγιον λαός/*genus electum regale sacerdotium gens sancta*), a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." The language here clearly draws on Exod 19:6, where Yahweh tells Moses/Israel that "you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (קִדְשׁ וְגוֹי כֹהֲנִים מְמַלְכָּתְךָ/βασιλειον ιεράτευμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον/*regnum sacerdotale et gens sancta*).

Eleazar's making his address about *uirtus* gives it the air of a Roman general addressing his troops.⁵⁷ He argues for perseverance (*constantia*), a commitment to unchangingness of purpose (*non mutare mentem*) rather than surrender to fate (*euentus*). Eleazar states that this renders his hearers *insuperabiles*. To give form to these ideals, Eleazar calls on *pater Abraham*, who did not establish (*non instituit*) for the Jews a way of life that supports fear of death (*metus mortis*). Instead, Eleazar maintains, Abraham taught (*docuit*) that being sacrificed *pro religione* results not in *mors* but in *immortalitas* (cf. *De Excidio* 3.2.1). The exegetical assumptions implied in Eleazar's use of the Akedah story here are not to be found in the biblical account of Gen 22, but rather within its history of interpretation: Early and Hellenistic Judaism, early Christianity, and rabbinic Judaism all contain interpretations of this story that resonate with Eleazar's emphasis upon Abraham/Isaac as heroic ideals, the story's pedagogical value, and/or death versus immortality.⁵⁸ Likely to be most significant in this regard are (1) Philo and Josephus, who emphasize the Akedah's religious significance and compare it to the self-immolation of the gymnosophists of India, as does Ps-Hegesippus;⁵⁹ (2) New Testament passages such as Rom 8:32, Heb 11:17–19, and Jam 2:21–23, which Ps-Hegesippus will have known;⁶⁰ (3) 4 Maccabees, given Ps-Hegesippus' extensive engagement with that text/tradition and the context in which the Akedah emerges in *De Excidio* (that of Jewish martyrdom);⁶¹ and (4) Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, where the Akedah is mentioned “in the course of speeches delivered at important moments in Israel's

⁵⁷ Hansen 1993 is an interesting study on an uninteresting question (“are such speeches reliably reported or not?”).

⁵⁸ Cf. *Jubilees* 17.15–18.19; Philo *Abr.* 167–207; Ps-Philo *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 18.5, 32.1–4, 40.2–3; 4 Macc 7:11–14, 13:12, 16:18–20; *Targum to Leviticus* 22:27; *Targum Neofiti* 22:8, 10, 14; Noort and Tigchelaar 2002.

⁵⁹ Philo calls the Akedah evidence of Abraham's εὐσβεΐα (*Abr.* 208); Josephus repeatedly emphasizes Abraham's actions on behalf of θρησκεία. On the gymnosophists see Philo *Abr.* 182–83. Philo references the Indian practice of women burning themselves alive if their husbands precede them in death as proof of their commendable contempt for death (καταφρονητικῶς ἔχοντα θανάτου) and as a move toward immortality (ἀθανασία).

⁶⁰ Heb 11:17–19: “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your descendants shall be called.’ He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.”

⁶¹ See Doerfler 2019, 103–43.

history,” just like in the passages of *De Excidio* dealt with in this chapter.⁶²

Whatever the inspirations for Ps-Hegesippus’ particular rendering of Eleazar’s take on Abraham and the Akedah, its point is clear: Eleazar offers his listeners the opportunity to die *pro religio* and thereby to achieve *immortalitas* and demonstrate the *uirtus* and *constantia* taught by Abraham’s example. Abraham serves as the quintessential *exemplum* of the noble national character of the Jews. But Eleazar does not leave things there. Before moving on in a much more philosophical vein into a discussion of bodies and souls, life and death, Ps-Hegesippus has Eleazar bring several more biblical *exempla* to the table:

What shall I say of Josiah, than whom no one was a better expounder of *religio*, despiser of death, advocate of liberty? For he, located on that regal promontory wherefrom it was possible to escape death, yet because he saw that on account of [its] grievous sins the captivity of the people of Israel was impending, embroiled himself in a foreign war, and he fled life. Neco cried out: “I have not been sent against you, but to the king of Israel.” Yet he did not fall back before falling victim to the lethal point of an arrow. Cast down by this wound, he is an indication to us whether merit or chance is more influential in war. Josiah, the restorer of sacred rites, was defeated, and Neco, the most villainous of all people, was victorious, but he (Josiah), conquered, is now with the angels, and this “victor” is in torment.

De Excidio 5.53.1⁶³

Eleazar’s enlistment of King Josiah, an ancient King of Judah famous for religious reform (2 Kgs 22–23//2 Chr 34–35),⁶⁴ underlines and clarifies the argument he is making. For Eleazar, Josiah was a paragon of the idea of noble death he is constructing: Rather than avoid a fight with

⁶² It should also be noted that the *Biblical Antiquities* were translated into Latin by the end of the fourth century. The Akedah is mentioned in the author’s recounting of the Jephthah vow (40.2–3). The *Biblical Antiquities*’ emphasis upon the soul (*anima*) links it to Eleazar’s speech, which takes on a very neo-Platonic flavor later as it speaks of soul and body, life and death (as in Josephus). See also *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 32.1–4.

⁶³ CSEL 66.1: 408: *Quid Iosiam praedicem, quo nemo melior fuit interpret religionis, contemtor mortis, adsertor libertatis? Namque is in illo suggestu regali locatus cui liceret differre mortem, tamen quia uidebat propter peccata grauia captiuitatem plebis Israhel futuram, bello se alieno miscuit, uitam refugit. Clamabat Nechao: non aduersus te misus sum, sed ad regem Israhel. Ille tamen non prius recessit quam letalem sagittae ictum subiret. Quo fusus uulnere indicio nobis est, utrum in bello meritum an casus praeponderet. Victus est Iosias piorum instaurator sacrorum, uicit Nechao omnium sceleratis-simus, sed ille uictus nunc cum angelis est, hic uictor in suppliciis.*

⁶⁴ 1 Esd 1:25–31; Josephus *Ant.* 10.50–73; Sweeney 2001; Talshir 1996.

Pharaoh Neco (which he easily could have done),⁶⁵ Josiah went out to fight against him, putatively on behalf of *religio* and *libertas* and exemplifying contempt for death (as a *contemptor mortis*).⁶⁶ (This was the Battle of Megiddo, c. 609 BCE.) Eleazar states that Josiah was impelled to resist Neco on account of foreseeing the impending *captiuitas* of the *plebs Israhel*, an eventuality forthcoming due to Israel's *peccata grauia*.⁶⁷ If Ps-Hegesippus here is recalling 2 Kg 23:27, then *plebs Israhel* refers to Judah/Jerusalem. Yet whether through a sloppy reading of 2 Chr 35:21 or, as I am inclined to think, through his own invention, Ps-Hegesippus has Eleazar reimagine the Josiah–Neco engagement at Megiddo not as an affair⁶⁸ of international politics (which it was), but as pertaining particularly to God's people, understood as Judah + Israel. It was a “national” issue. This recreating of ancient history adapts to Eleazar's rhetoric of national unity and patriotic spirit. For him, Josiah becomes an *exemplum* of a *Judean* or *Judahite* (king) putting himself in harm's way, despising death, *for Israel*. Eleazar ameliorates Josiah's defeat/death with recourse to the idea of chance, *euentus*, a favorite explanatory device for causality within *De Excidio*.⁶⁹ This, for Eleazar, explains how Josiah the *piorum instaurator sacrorum* could become *uictus* to the *uictor* Neco, whom he describes as *omnium sceleratissimus*. But in the end, Eleazar locates Josiah's post-mortem habitation as being with the angels (*cum angelis*), whereas Neco is placed in tortures (*in suppliciis*).⁷⁰ Like Abraham, Josiah's actions carry an ethical teaching about life, death, and life after death.

In contradistinction to the message of Titus' speech in *De Excidio* 5.41, Eleazar's discourse employs Abraham and Josiah as models of how one should apprehend death: It is to be weighed not against life, but against life after death. Eleazar even backs his argument with one more pair of *exempla*, Cain and Abel; this most ancient duo as well, he avers, show that the value of life is to be gauged not by the present, but by the

⁶⁵ Josiah's political opponents might have said that he had picked a fight with Neco for no reason. See rabbinic commentary in *b. Ta'anit* 22b.

⁶⁶ The accounts of 2 Chr 35:20–27, 1 Esd 1:25–31, and Josephus *Ant.* 10.70–78 (cf. Jer 46) are longer and more detailed than 2 Kgs 23:29–30. Cf. Wis 4:11; 2 Bar 66:1–7; Sir 49:1–7; Ps-Justin *Quaestiones et responsiones* 79.

⁶⁷ A nod to 2 Kgs 23:26–27.

⁶⁸ The affair is dealt with differently at *De Excidio* 5.16.1 (Chapter 9).

⁶⁹ See, e.g., *De Excidio* 5.19.1. In Josephus, it is fate (τὸ χρεών) that ordains Josiah's doom; Feldman 1998b, 287n9.

⁷⁰ Cf. the contrasting post-mortem fates imagined by Matthias in *De Excidio* 5.22.1, discussed in Chapter 5.

hereafter.⁷¹ This is not simply a philosophical but also an ethnic and national issue. It is another instance of the ethnographic impulse mapped onto character speeches within Ps-Hegesippus' historiography. At 5.53.1, Eleazar is casting a vision for *who the Jews are*, or at least who they had been and could and should be now. The rhetorical force of Eleazar's statement reinforces something already present in *De Excidio*: the idea that the Jews as a people are willing to resist the Romans because they do not fear death, because they "believe in" immortality/eternal life, because Abraham and Josiah established (*instituit/docuit*) a mode of life whose vision extends well beyond mortality. This ethnically charged typecasting contradicts Titus' ad hoc Jewish ethnology, but not by denying Titus' premises. According to Eleazar, the Jews *had* inherited an approach to life that allowed for despising death,⁷² even for being willing to kill children (after all, what is he asking his hearers atop Masada to do?). But this willingness to die, which Eleazar dubs *uirtus*,⁷³ is not what Titus apprehends: a heedless *deuotio* to an ill-informed *pietas* and barbarian *religio*. Rather, Eleazar suggests, it is the correct response to a cultural inheritance, embodied by Hebrew heroes, that carries a different understanding of death.

The rest of Eleazar's speech at 5.53 bears this out, near its end reinforcing its patriotic fervor: There Eleazar states, "Let our country be to us a tomb of freedom" (*fiat nobis patria libertatis sepulchrum*). The final section of that chapter (5.53.2), which ends the work, records the dénouement of Eleazar's philosophy put to action. These final Jews of *De Excidio*'s narrative – that is, the final Jews of history as far as Ps-Hegesippus is concerned – at that

⁷¹ After the Josiah/Neco discussion, Eleazar's speech continues (*De Excidio* 5.53.1, CSEL 66.1: 408–9): "For who does not know that recompense is not paid to men in this life, but rather after the completion of this struggle? For here we hurry, so that there we may arrive at the palm (of victory); here is struggle, but there reward. Therefore there is here no gain in a long lifespan. Indeed, Abel died early, Cain lived on. For this reason there came about the death of the innocent and the hardship of life." See further [Somenzi 2009](#), 86–87.

⁷² Later in the speech, Eleazar will give this argument further ethnographic flavor by enlisting the *mos* of other nations (here, Indians) as explanatory and justifying parallels to Jewish practice: "Whence it is the practice of not a few peoples, that the birth of a person is met with tears but his death with rejoicing, because they mourn those born to destruction, but they celebrate those who have returned to happiness, they lament when their souls have come into servitude, they rejoice at their returning to liberty" (*De Excidio* 5.53.1, CSEL 66.1: 410). [Somenzi 2009](#), 55, notes that this *exemplum* appears here independent of Josephus, resembling ideas/language in Ambrose *De excessu fratris sui Satyri* 2.5; Pomponius Mela 2.2.18; Valerius Maximus 2.6.12; Solinus 10.2–3.

⁷³ On *uirtus* as the central Roman virtue, see [Balmaceda 2017](#), 1.

point killed themselves (hadn't they been doing this all along, according to Ps-Hegesippus?), thus marking the completion of the Roman-Jewish War, the end of *De Excidio*'s storyline, and the demise of the Jews.⁷⁴

CLASSICAL PRECURSORS AND CHRISTIAN PARALLELS

Ps-Hegesippus' use of Abraham and others to effect anti- and pro-Jewish ethnographies through different characters in his narrative betrays literary ingenuity. Yet he did not do this in a traditionary vacuum. One can find classical precursors among earlier Latin historians where the same rhetorical dynamics and literary features are at work. One can also locate Christian parallels illustrating that the subject matter of Ps-Hegesippus' Abraham ethnography was not niche or obscure in late antiquity – it was *avant garde*. That is, the *concept* of Ps-Hegesippus' Abraham ethnography may be seen to reflect classical predecessors, while its *content* strikes a chord with Ps-Hegesippus' Christian peers. None of this is to say that Ps-Hegesippus necessarily knew this previous and contemporaneous literature – though it would not be surprising if he did; rather, my point is that these comparanda make the content of this chapter more phenomenologically intelligible, underscoring the amalgamation of Christianity and Classicism at work within *De Excidio*'s exemplarity.

That I know of, the most striking parallel to the pair of speeches discussed here, *De Excidio* 5.41.2 (Titus) and 5.53.1 (Eleazar), comes from Livy.⁷⁵ In the fourth decade of Livy's *Ab Vrbe Condita*,⁷⁶ two speeches

⁷⁴ *De Excidio* 5.53.2 (CSEL 66.1: 416–17): “The others, kindled to action by such a speech, were holding their drawn swords, they were kissing their spouses, picking up their children in embraces, crying and at the same time hurrying so as to anticipate the enemy. Eleazar said, ‘We give these tokens of love to you as consolation for this final necessity.’ They shut out their suffering by courageously restraining their emotions, and they completed the slaughter. Dauntless women offered themselves to blows for the preservation of their chastity. And in this they themselves donned the mentality of their husbands. And so, their families and children having been cut down, they delegated the strong to follow through with the full extent of the slaughter. And thus all were cast down, nine hundred sixty including women and little children. One lone woman survived, who had hidden her five sons in an aqueduct while the others had been making their final arrangements. She, awoken by the voices of the Romans who arrived at daybreak, was witness to the affair. The fire had already consumed their wealth, which they had previously placed aside.”

⁷⁵ In my earliest engagement with these two passages, I benefited from conversation with and criticism from Jessica Clark, Alex Lee, and Erich Gruen.

⁷⁶ Ps-Hegesippus may have known this decade of Livy: Brakman 1932, 326 (comparing *De Excidio* 1.32.2 and Livy 34.2.2). On Ps-Hegesippus' knowledge of Livy, cf. Bell 1977, 46, 97, 99–103.

appear a book apart that deal directly with questions of what particular peoples are like; in each case, a non-Roman group is compared to the Romans.⁷⁷ At 37.54, Livy adapts a speech of the Rhodian embassy before the Roman senate from Polybius (21.22.5–21.23.13). Where Polybius' speech was politically oriented, Livy changes the speech toward a concerted discussion of identity, geography, and environment. Arguing their own cause, in a part of the speech with no Polybian parallel, Livy's Rhodians argue against the idea that cities in Attic territories are "more Greek" (*Graecae magis*) than Greek colonies in Asia. They reason that "the change of land did not change their lineage or culture" (*nec terra mutata mutavit genus aut mores*).⁷⁸ The Rhodians generalize philosophically about identity vis-à-vis translocation:

If one's innate character (*natura insita*) could be overcome by what one may term the character of the land (*ingenio terrae*), the people of Massilia would long ago have been brutalized by so many uncivilized tribes living around them (*effrassent tot indomitae circumfusae gentes*); but we are told that they are held in as much honor and are deservedly shown as much respect by you as if they were living in the very heart of Greece. They have preserved, pure and untouched by contact with their neighbors, not only the pronunciation of their language, their mode of dress and overall appearance, but above all their culture, laws and character (*non enim sonum modo linguae vestitumque et habitum, sed ante omnia mores et leges et ingenium sincerum integrumque a contagione accolarum servarunt*).

Livy 37.54.21–22⁷⁹

Livy takes a political speech as an opportunity to voice positions on *genus* and *gentes*, not only on what particular people are like but on what "being like" something – that is, identity – is.⁸⁰

At Livy 38.17, the Roman Consul Manlius addresses his troops with a stirring oration before a military encounter with the Gauls. (This speech has no parallel in Polybius.) In the Roman imagination, the Gauls were a people bellicose and wild. It is perhaps unsurprising that the speech ends up focusing on Gaulness and Greekness and *Romanitas*. Manlius begins with a summative stereotype of the Gauls as a *genus hominum ferox natio* (38.17.3); they have "tall frames and long, red-dyed hair" (*procera corpora, promissae et rutilatae comae*) in addition to distinctive implements of war (38.17.4). He explains why his soldiers should *not* fear these men, however: They do not match the Romans in endurance

⁷⁷ For a brief discussion of these speeches in tandem, see Lomas 2004, 482.

⁷⁸ Livy 37.54.18 (LCL 301: 454–55); Gruen 1984, 132–57 (also 275).

⁷⁹ LCL 301: 454–55.

⁸⁰ I.e. "the environmental theory" or "physiognomy." See Isaac 2004, 88–109.

and actual battlefield performance. Interestingly, Livy then has Manlius expound a kind of ad hoc philosophy of race:

Besides, those ancestors of ours had genuine Gauls to deal with, men born in their own land (*illis maioribus nostris cum haud dubiis Gallis, in sua terra genitis*). These are now a lesser breed, mongrels and truly “Gallograeci” (*degeneres sunt, mixti, et Gallograeci vere*) as they are called. It is the same in the vegetable and animal world: seeds have not the power to preserve the strain to the extent that the natural qualities of the soil and the climate in which they grow change it. Macedonians who inhabit Alexandria in Egypt, or Seleucia and Babylon, and other colonies scattered throughout the world, have degenerated into Syrians, Parthians and Egyptians. Massilia, situated among the Gauls, has derived some of its character from its neighbors (*traxit aliquantum ab accolis animorum*). What do the people of Tarentum have left of their tough and rugged Spartan discipline (*quid ex Spartana dura illa et horrida disciplina*)? Whatever grows in its own natural surroundings is of superior quality. Planted in foreign soil its nature changes and it declines to the level of the environment by which it is fed.

Livy 38.17.9–13⁸¹

Here Livy’s Manlius posits an idea that appears to be in conversation with what we found in the speech of 37.54: there the idea that moving does not fundamentally change people, here the idea that it necessarily and inevitably does. Manlius reinforces his argument via analogy to the change that occurs in domesticated animals and vegetables, driving home the point that his Roman soldiers will face Gauls with *mollia corpora* and *molles animi*, who do not possess “the sort of courage they had of old” (*antiquum specimen animorum*; 38.17.20). Along with 37.54, 38.17 thus forms a pair of speeches that are vehicles with which Livy can project ideas about the fixity versus fluidity of essential identity: What are different peoples like, and does that – can that – change?⁸²

Livy’s twin speeches at 37.54 and 38.17 bear remarkable resemblance to the speeches of Titus and Eleazar.⁸³ Just as Livy improves upon an earlier Greek source (Polybius), so also does Ps-Hegesippus (Josephus). Each pair of speeches has one speech that is based upon (but departs from) its Greek source and one that is constructed independent of its Greek source. Both sets of speeches put one oration into the mouth of a Roman leader, the other into the mouth(s) of an ethnic “other,” whether Greek-Asian (Rhodian) or Jewish. Indeed, both sets of speeches pit Roman

⁸¹ LCL 313: 56–57. See Gruen 2011, 344n193.

⁸² Cf. Foulkes 1999.

⁸³ Like Josephus (e.g., *War* 3.362–82), Ps-Hegesippus will have known of speech pairs from authors like Sallust and Dionysius of Halicarnassus: Rajak 2002, 89.

imperial self-consciousness and identity against nearby “others,” Rhodians and Gauls in *Ab Vrbe Condita*, Jews in *De Excidio*. Moreover, both sets of speeches use ancestors (*maiores*) and *exempla* to instantiate the points under discussion. Most fundamentally, both Livy and Ps-Hegesippus use their speech sets to pose and play with basic questions of ethnic stereotype: What kind of people *are* Rhodians or Gauls or Jews? Such a comparison renders prescient Albert Bell’s comment that Ps-Hegesippus’ adaptations of Josephus’ speeches generally appear “strikingly similar to the way Livy treated the speeches of Polybius.”⁸⁴ This is not to say that Ps-Hegesippus and Livy were singularities in this regard among ancient historians.⁸⁵ Nor is it to say that Livy provided the template for Ps-Hegesippus’ adaptive speech-writing. It is to say, however, that the questions Livy’s speeches pose, and how they deal with them, make a great deal of sense of the two speeches from *De Excidio* discussed earlier. As a Latin-writing historian in the ancient Roman world, Ps-Hegesippus was just doing with his Abraham ethnography of 5.41.2 and 5.53.1 exactly what classical historians had long done. *De Excidio* is a work of innovation within a tradition.

Ps-Hegesippus’ Abraham ethnography has another kind of classical precursor as well. Specifically, the attachment of particular figures to national essences emerges again, for example, in Livy. Livy 37.36.2 effectively conflates Scipio Africanus with the Roman national character: The general’s *animus* maps seamlessly onto Roman *mores*. Conversely, Livy famously described Hannibal as a paragon of faithlessness (21.4.9–10), imputing to him a “perfidy more than Punic” (*perfidia plus quam Punica*); and of course, for Livy the Carthaginians, like their great general, are a race with “perfidy ingrained in their souls” (*insita animis perfidia*; 30.32.8). For Livy, as for so many Roman authors, a people’s national character could be readily described by reference to one key founding figure. Ps-Hegesippus, it would seem, knew of this convention.

In addition to classical precursors like Livy, Ps-Hegesippus had Christian peers. The specific biblical stories that Ps-Hegesippus conjures align him with other Christian writers of his time. Abraham as a figure, and the Akedah as a story, were among the most important and popular pieces of tradition within Christian antiquity. Ambrose penned an entire work *On Abraham* (as Philo had done before him). More to the point, Abraham and the Akedah had particular potential to speak

⁸⁴ Bell 1977, 136 (also 14–17, 98–111, 115, 135).

⁸⁵ Compare the twin speeches of Cicero and Fufius Calenus in Dio Cassius 45.32.3 and 46.19.8; Roller 2018, 59.

to issues of identity and differentiation precisely because Abraham was seen as the first Hebrew, progenitor of the race. One of the most famous and influential demonstrations of this fact comes from Eusebius' *Church History*, which says that Abraham, "whom the children of the Hebrews take pride in as their own origin and forefather,"⁸⁶ should actually be called a "Christian," just like any other righteous people among the earliest folk.⁸⁷ It was with Abraham that Christians began their own historical records, as the *Chronicle* of Eusebius (and later Jerome) also shows.⁸⁸ Christians appropriated Abraham as their own ancestor and rhetorically turned him against his one-time "children," the Jews.⁸⁹

But this could go the other way as well: The Emperor Julian saw the Christian claim to Abrahamic ancestry as illegitimate.⁹⁰ For him, Abraham was an ancient theurgist whose ritual practice aligned with his vision of a revived Hellenic, polytheistic religiosity. Thus, Ps-Hegesippus' ad hoc viewing of Abraham "through Roman eyes" (i.e., Titus) is actually au courant, perhaps articulating, albeit not endorsing, Roman (non-Judaeo-Christian) takes on Abraham. This becomes all the more likely if Ps-Hegesippus wrote in Julian's short-lived wake.⁹¹ All in all, Abraham's legacy became central not only to Judaism, but also to Christianity, and to Islam,⁹² and was even known outside of this monotheistic milieu: The mid-fourth-century *Historiae Augustae* records in its *Vita Alexandri Severi* (7) a tradition wherein the emperor had a sanctuary containing statues of various deified persons, including, of all people, Abraham (!).⁹³ Thus, when Ps-Hegesippus has historical characters talk about Abraham as a representative example of who the Jews are, he is participating in a culture-wide conversation among Christians, and others, that was well-worn and widely known. His readers would have appreciated the "relevance" of having Abraham appear in the story in the novel contexts of *De Excidio* 5.41.2 and 5.53.1.

⁸⁶ τὸν Ἀβραάμ, ὃν ἀρχηγὸν καὶ προπάτορα σφῶν αὐτῶν παῖδες Ἑβραίων αὐχοῦσι. Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 1.4.5 (LCL 153: 40–41).

⁸⁷ Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 1.4.5–6, from Schott 2019, 54.

⁸⁸ Hollerich 2021, 28, 106–7, but cf. 179.

⁸⁹ Theophilus of Antioch *Ad Autolyicum* 3.24 (where Abraham is "our patriarch"); cf. 3.20, where "the Hebrew ... are ... our ancestors." Discussed in Buell 2008, 81. Cf. Runesson 2011; Siker 1991. On "exegetical encounters" between Christians and Jews vis-à-vis the Akedah, see Kessler 2004.

⁹⁰ Julian *Contra Galilaeos* 209E; 343D; 351A–B; 354B–C; 356C–E; 358D–E. Finkelstein 2018, 66ff (and 186n77).

⁹¹ Per Bell 1977 (and 1987, etc.).

⁹² Renard 2020, 7; Levenson 2012.

⁹³ That is, along with Abraham, statues of deified emperors, Apollonius of Tyana, Jesus Christ, Orpheus, and others. See van der Horst 2010, 73; Rohrbacher 2016, 92, 96, 120.

Ps-Hegesippus' specific combination of the Akedah and the Jephthah narrative of Judges 11 (in Titus' speech), and the story of the Maccabean mother-martyr and her sons (e.g., *De Excidio* 5.2, 5.22), was also a trope. The thematic parallels between the stories, upon which Ps-Hegesippus capitalizes, is clear: the death and/or sacrifice of children. As it happens, many late ancient Christian authors combined these same stories as *exempla* with which to think, talk, and teach about the death of children. Maria Doerfler has shown how authors like Augustine, Chrysostom, Ephrem, and Shenoute (representing the Latin, Greek, Syriac, and Coptic worlds of Christian late antiquity) were "ready to bring to the fore the intertextual relationship between" the Gen 22 and Judg 11 stories.⁹⁴ They did so, for example, to support the decision of offering one's child to a monastic vocation or for teaching that God did *not* approve of human sacrifice. Doerfler's study helps explain why Ps-Hegesippus would use the *exempla* he does at *De Excidio* 5.41.2 and 5.53.1, and Ps-Hegesippus helps texture the picture her study is designed to paint. Doerfler's book uses well-known (often biblical) stories of the death of children as a tool "to rethink the death of children in late antiquity, its impact on families, and the ways in which particularly Christian writers sought to assist families in thinking about its challenges."⁹⁵ Similar yet different, Ps-Hegesippus chose to use famous stories of the death of children to imagine how a Roman general and Jewish zealot might understand a larger, ethnic "family" – that is, the Jews – as inheritors of such traditions, and to serve as narrative vehicles for transporting biblical *exempla* into narrativized orations for ethnographic ends. Abraham's and Jephthah's sacrifices become stories for thinking about *who the Jews are*. Ps-Hegesippus' combination of these *exempla* is a Christian one.

Abraham, and to a lesser extent figures like Jephthah and Josiah, was widely known within Judeo-Christian tradition. Thus, Ps-Hegesippus is not alone in talking about the biblical stories associated with them. Clear links to texts Ps-Hegesippus might have sourced, however, are harder to find. Nevertheless, one might reasonably guess that 4 Maccabees inspired Eleazar's use of Abraham at *De Excidio* 5.53.1.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Doerfler 2019, 106.

⁹⁵ Doerfler 2019, 5.

⁹⁶ All of the (admittedly common) *exempla* in 4 Macc, with the single exception of Phinehas, are treated in *De Excidio* as well: Joseph (4 Macc 2:2–5; 18:11), Moses (2:17–18), Jacob (2:19–20), David (3:6–16), Abraham (6:17, 22; 9:21; 13:12; 14:20; 16:20; 17:6; 18:1, 20, 23), Aaron (7:11–12), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (7:19; 13:17; 16:25), Hana-niah, Azariah, and Mishael (13:9; 16:3, 21; 18:12), Isaac (13:12; 16:20; 18:11), Daniel (16:3, 21; 18:13), Abel (18:11), and Phinehas (18:12). See van Henten (forthcoming).

In 4 Macc 6:17–22, a different Eleazar addresses himself and the children of his fellow Jews as “children of Abraham” (οἱ Ἀβραὰμ παῖδες; 6:17) and, as Jan Willem van Henten has recently shown, uses the notion of εὐσέβεια to justify a pious death. Eleazar’s appeal to “die nobly on behalf of piety” (εὐγενῶς ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐσεβείας τελευτᾶτε; 6:22) sounds a great deal like the rebel Eleazar’s comment in *De Excidio* 5.53.1 to the effect that immortality awaits the one who “should be killed on behalf of *religio*” (*si pro religione immolaretur*). Also reminiscent of Eleazar’s vocative *Abramidae* in *De Excidio* are three adjectives 4 Maccabees makes from Abraham’s name – Ἀβρααμεῖτις, Ἀβρααμιαῖος and Ἀβρααμίθιος (“Abrahamic,” “Abraham-like”) – that are “unique within the Septuagint.”⁹⁷ The use of the Abraham *exemplum* in 4 Maccabees also implies immortality as opposed to mortality for the one who dies piously (7:19) and cites the Akedah as a direct example that instructs one how to die well (13:12). As in 4 Macc 13 (cf. 16:20), moreover, Abraham’s incentive to sacrifice Isaac in Gen 22 is discussed in terms of εὐσέβεια, parallel to Ps-Hegesippus’ *religio*, unlike the wealth of tradition that explains Abraham’s actions in terms of πίστις or *fides*. Abraham’s example is too widespread for us to say confidently that *De Excidio* 5.53.1 reflects the Abraham *exemplum* of 4 Maccabees. But the possibility exists, and it bids us remember the diversity of Ps-Hegesippus’ possible sources.

ABRAHAM AND THE AKEDAH: EXEMPLARITY, ETHNOGRAPHY, IDENTITY, RHETORIC, ORATORY

In the Introduction and [Chapter 1](#) we mentioned how ancient historiography was built upon, indeed was, rhetoric. We noted that oratory – that is, speeches imputed to historical characters – did a great deal of the rhetorical work within ancient histories. We also allowed John Marincola to remind us that exemplarity was a stock feature of just this literary-rhetorical context within just this genre of ancient Greco-Roman literature.⁹⁸ In this chapter we have seen where all of these features of classical historiography and exemplarity combine to create a particular kind of ethnography within *De Excidio*. Tapping one of the most well-known and potent stories within biblical tradition, Ps-Hegesippus brings forth Abraham (and others) as

⁹⁷ Van Henten (forthcoming); 4 Macc 9:21; 18:1, 20, 23.

⁹⁸ Marincola 2010.

exempla that allow him, by means of his story's characters, to toss around ideas about who the Jews are, what they are like, and why they are like that. Because he does this through the mouths of others, Ps-Hegesippus has a bit of creative freedom to explore these questions. The opinions expressed need not be his own; like any ancient historian, Ps-Hegesippus was capable of "throwing his voice."⁹⁹ Nor is it clear with whose version of Abraham's essential "meaning," that of Titus or Eleazar, Ps-Hegesippus would have agreed. The contents and language of *De Excidio* identify its author as a Roman.¹⁰⁰ But as a Christian, Ps-Hegesippus likely viewed himself as a child of Abraham in some sense. He would not have viewed Abraham's legacy as nonsense or immoral. But would he have seen it as a call to actively despise death? Ps-Hegesippus' use of Abraham *et alia* to do ethnography retains a touch of ambivalence.

* * *

Matthew Roller has stressed the special capacity of *exempla* in the Roman world to explore and suss out specific moral conundrums.¹⁰¹ This comports with Rebecca Langlands' assessment of Roman *exempla* as "fundamentally controversial," malleable symbols useful for evaluating right and wrong action.¹⁰² Ps-Hegesippus' use of Abraham and other ancestral *exempla* to explore different perspectives on who the Jews are and what they are like comes into clear relief against this backdrop of Roman exemplarity. However, as we have seen, while the form and method of Ps-Hegesippus' exemplarity may largely reflect Roman precursors, the content of his exemplarity situates him within late antique Christian discourse.

The narrative upshot of Titus' and Eleazar's cogitations upon Abraham are important. For Titus, "who the Jews are" has everything to do with the reasonableness of his subsequent action: the destruction of Jerusalem and effective decimation of the Jews. For Eleazar, the Jewish character forms the center of his argument for "noble death" à la patriotic mass suicide. In both cases, Abraham's willingness to kill his son is

⁹⁹ See Adler 2011, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Sehlmeier 2009, 293–94, suggests that Ps-Hegesippus "nimmt den Blinkwinkel eines christlichen Römers ein."

¹⁰¹ Roller 2018, 33–34, 63, *et alibi*.

¹⁰² Langlands 2018, 1–13.

taken as representative of a native contempt for death among the Jews. In one sense, both understandings of Abraham in *De Excidio* anticipate Jewish death, whether it be brought on from the outside or instigated from within.

Biblical *exempla* allowed Ps-Hegesippus to think through questions of Jewish identity and essence on the page, and also to configure historical causality as it pertained to the Jews. Yet, thanks to the conventions of scripted oratory within ancient historiography, he need not commit himself to a pagan, Roman denigration of the Jews via Abraham (via Titus) nor to a nationalistic Jewish lionization of Abraham (via Eleazar). Instead, Ps-Hegesippus uses *exempla* to put these two Jewish stereotypes on the table, and he leaves them in some tension. Such was the prerogative of the ancient historian. No doubt an author like Ps-Hegesippus would have learned to think in just these terms – that is, counterpunctually via ancient exemplars – from his earliest education. Point and counterpoint, and the deft deployment of *exempla*, were the warp and woof of ancient rhetoric and rhetorical education, and of basic grammatical education before that.¹⁰³ Thus, the use of Abraham and other *exempla* in *De Excidio* 5.41.2 and 5.53.1 reveals an educated late antique author approaching his subject matter – in this case Jewish history – in terms of his basic grammatical and rhetorical training. Christianness aside, Ps-Hegesippus refracts the mores of literate late antiquity as an author conversant in the readerly and writerly expectations of exemplarity, dialogical rhetoric, and historical ethnography. His creative license in dealing with Abraham divulges this.

Catherine Chin has shown how grammar played a central role in the conceptual creation of Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries.¹⁰⁴ Daniel Boyarin has argued that Christians largely created Judaism within this process of self-realization during the same period.¹⁰⁵ In Ps-Hegesippus, we see the leveraging of grammatical and rhetorical education toward similar kinds of identity-constructive ends. In this chapter and [Chapter 2](#) we have seen how biblical *exempla* help Ps-Hegesippus form notions of Jewish (and Hebrew) identity. He did this against the usually implicit backdrop of Christian identity, a fixation of early Christian empire.¹⁰⁶ Yet,

¹⁰³ Kaster 1988, 12; Marrou 1982, 231–36.

¹⁰⁴ Chin 2008.

¹⁰⁵ Boyarin 2004.

¹⁰⁶ Cameron 1991; Schott 2008.

if Ps-Hegesippus plays with the historicized identity of the Jews, how did he understand their national trajectory over time? And if Ps-Hegesippus really understood Jewishness largely in reference to Christianness, does he ever hint at their contesting valences and valuations? [Chapters 4](#) and [5](#) answer these questions in turn.

Exemplarity and National Decline at *De Excidio* 5.2.1

In [Chapter 2](#) we saw how Ps-Hegesippus involved biblical *exempla* in a discourse designed to differentiate the distinct yet related groups of the *Hebraei* and the *Iudaei*. In [Chapter 3](#) we discovered that certain *exempla* like Abraham (and Jephthah and Josiah) enabled Ps-Hegesippus to consider questions of historical Jewish identity and virtue from diverse viewpoints within *De Excidio*. I suggested that both of these discourses reflect norms of ethnography within ancient literature. Just as common within ancient accounts of peoples was the standard trope of a decline-and-fall narrative scheme. Many ancient historians occupied themselves with the question of how a particular people had become great: thus did Polybius, and many others, regarding the Romans. On the flip side, historians also frequently dwelt on the theme of national decline. Narrating the latter-day plight of a once-great people, the historian would effectively ask: What happened? This is a question that Ps-Hegesippus asks, and answers, concerning the Jews.

Nowhere in *De Excidio* is the theme of Jewish national decline more on display than in the address of *De Excidio* 5.2.¹ There we find a striking oration in which the author himself addresses Jerusalem (and, by proxy, the Jews). He begins by calling to witness five famous heroes of the Hebrew Bible: Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, and Elisha. Ps-Hegesippus bids these great leaders of Hebrew antiquity behold the sorry state of 70 CE Jerusalem, juxtaposing their worthy deeds with the failures of his narrative's first-century Jewish present. Here Ps-Hegesippus employs a

¹ On this chapter, cf. [Bay 2020](#). On *De Excidio* 5.2 more fully, see [Bay 2018](#).

brand of chronology popularized a half-century earlier by Eusebius:² a historical narrative of Jewish national decline.

Thinking of peoples or nations as declining over time was characteristic of the Greco-Roman imagination.³ It was also an idea with iterations in Jewish Scripture and tradition. Ps-Hegesippus draws upon both streams of tradition, and ends up producing what looks like a biblicized iteration of a commonplace theme among Roman historians. While talking in Christian terms about Jewish subjects, in style and vocabulary Ps-Hegesippus joins authors like Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus, who used ancient paragons of virtue to pass judgment on a perceived lack of *uir-tus* in their respective contemporary spheres. But unlike Sallust, Livy, or Tacitus, who wrote mostly about Rome and Romans, Ps-Hegesippus writes not about his *own* people but about late antique Christianity's proximate other, the Jews, and their representative city Jerusalem. In focusing on this particular story of decline, *De Excidio* joins earlier Christian writings like the Acts of the Apostles and the works of Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, and Tertullian, to name a few. Ps-Hegesippus both resembles and contrasts with his classical and Christian predecessors. In a similar vein, Ps-Hegesippus' use of particular biblical *exempla* at *De Excidio* 5.2.1 in some ways resonates with the treatment of these figures in other Christian authors of late antiquity (like Ambrose of Milan and John Chrysostom), but also departs significantly from certain Christian norms.

EXEMPLARITY, SPEECHES, AND NATIONAL DECLINE IN ROMAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

The theme of national decline was a standard one in Greco-Roman literature, particularly in historiography. Greek and Roman historians routinely compared the present political or moral state of affairs to the ancient nobility of their ancestors. In part, this seems to hearken back to Herodotus' programmatic statement that "many states once great have now become minor, and those that have been recently great ... were minor at one time"; that is, "human prosperity never remains in one condition" (1.5; cf. Josephus *War* 1.10). Herodotus sets the tone for subsequent histories: History was a story of change, with individuals, groups, and peoples either on the way up or on the way down. A sloped structure

² See Johnson 2004.

³ Kaster 2005, 3.

therefore finds realization in many histories of Greco-Roman antiquity, all of which talked about peoples or nations. National decline looms large in Thucydides' presentation of post-Periclean Athens.⁴ Sparta's well-known "crisis and decline" of the early fourth century received dissonant explanations by Xenophon, Isocrates, and Aristotle and later Polybius and Plutarch.⁵ Likewise Livy, paragon of Roman historiography, betrays in his narrative a "strong sense of a national decline from the qualities that made Rome great in the past."⁶ The same trend appears in Sallust.⁷ Indeed, the theme of decline became particularly prominent among Roman historians, such that "from the late Republic onwards, Roman writers often spoke of the present as corrupt, and of Rome's past as a prelapsarian golden age."⁸ As the Greek world became the Roman, national decline was firmly established as a *topos*. And this commonplace was oft articulated in terms of national ancestors (*maiores*) and their characteristic way of life (*mos*, or *mores*), standards against which descendants could be measured.

The rhetorical practice of articulating national decline via *exempla* within historiographical speeches was to be expected. As John Marincola has explained, "παράδειγματα or *exempla* are as old as Greek literature itself" and "when the Romans took over from the Greeks the systematic study of rhetoric, they took as well the importance of *exempla*, and, if anything, used historical *exempla* even more."⁹ This is to say that in ancient oratory, Greek and Roman, *exempla* constituted a *sine qua non*. Using them to illustrate national decline was an obvious, inescapable eventuality.

Perhaps the historian most characteristic of the Roman penchant to thematize national/moral decline is Sallust. (Keep in mind here that Sallust was a major influence upon Ps-Hegesippus' vocabulary and style.)¹⁰ Exemplarity fuels Sallust's construal(s) of decline. This corresponds to his insistence that political decline "results from conscious decisions made by individuals."¹¹ In his *War with Jugurtha*, Sallust

⁴ Azoulay 2014, 127; Thucydides 2.65.10–11.

⁵ Hodkinson 1989, 79–121.

⁶ Shauf 2015, 50.

⁷ See later in the chapter and Sallust *Bellum Catilinae* 52.19–23; *Bellum Jugurthinum* 4.5–9. Kraus 2000, 330–31; Balmaceda 2017, 73–82.

⁸ Harrison 2005, 287.

⁹ Marincola 2010, 267.

¹⁰ Bell 1977, 52.

¹¹ Balmaceda 2017, 81.

illustrates clearly how *exempla* could function within the Roman historical imagination:

I have often heard that Quintus Maximus, Publius Scipio, and other eminent men of our country were accustomed to declare that their hearts were set mightily aflame for the pursuit of virtue whenever they gazed upon the representations of their ancestors. It is evident that not the wax nor the effigy had any such intrinsic power, but rather it was from the memory of accomplishments that this flame swelled in the breast of exceptional men and could not be assuaged until their own prowess equaled the fame and glory of those models. By contrast, given today's morality, who in the world is there who does not vie with his ancestors in riches and extravagance rather than in uprightness and exertion? Even "new men," who in former times always relied upon worth to outdo the nobles, now strive for power and distinction by relying on intrigue and open fraud rather than noble practices.

Sallust *Bellum Jugurthinum* 4.5–8¹²

Sallust avers that physical representations of Roman ancestors (*maiorum imagines*), associated with great exploits (*memoria rerum gestarum*), once drove the *praeclari uiri* of the Roman *ciuitas* to pursue *uirtus* and *fama*. Here Sallust is articulating, and helping create, what became a foundational and characteristic tenet of Roman culture and worldview: that exemplary figures from the past were the de facto and appropriate measure for contemporary morality, politics, society, religion, and so on. Further, this passage points to a helpful heuristic for understanding *exempla* as rhetorical devices. *Exempla* here can operate (1a) positively or (1b) negatively, that is, to affirm/encourage or laud (positive) or to discourage or condemn (negative); (2a) retrospectively or (2b) prospectively, that is, to measure people or actions already displayed in the past or present (retrospective) or those that could, would, or should materialize *in the future* (prospective);¹³ and (3a) individually or (3b) corporately, that is, to assess one person/limited group of specific persons (individual) or a collective or "people in general" (corporate). Sallust's mention of Quintus Maximus, Scipio, and company illustrates exemplarity operating positively, prospectively, and individually: *Exempla* reflect positively on a particular group of individuals and *the things they were going to do* (in the future); his discussion of the *homines novi* ("new men") uses exemplarity to reflect negatively on people in general (within "today's morality," *his moribus*) and *what they have already done/are doing*. This

¹² LCL 116: 172–73.

¹³ Cf. Roller 2018, 8–9, 54, *et alibi*.

triple-binary framework is helpful for conceiving what exemplarity could do within the ancient historiographical imagination. Moreover, this passage shows *exempla* in action, as descendants come to base thought and behavior on their ancestors' ancient examples: Actions, social values, audiences, and imitation are all present.¹⁴

Sallust can also be used to show how exemplarity functioned to insinuate national decline within character speeches scripted by Roman historians. In a speech in *The War with Catiline*, M. Porcius Cato rebuts Caesar's advocacy of clemency for the conspirators. Cato bemoans Rome's national decline. He eventually conjures an *exemplum* to drive his point home:

Repeatedly, *patres conscripti*, I have spoken at great length in this body; often I have deplored the extravagance and greed of our citizens. ... To be sure we have long since lost the true names for things. It is precisely because squandering the goods of others is called generosity, and recklessness in wrongdoing is called courage, that the republic has been placed in a crisis. ... Do not suppose that it was by arms that our *maiores* made our country great from humble beginnings. If that were so, we would have a much fairer state than theirs, since we have a greater abundance of citizens and allies than they possessed, to say nothing of arms and horses. But there were other qualities which made them great, which we do not possess at all: exertion at home, a just rule abroad, in counsel an independent spirit enslaved to neither misdeed nor passion. In place of these, we have *luxuria* and *avaritia*, public poverty and private opulence. We extol wealth, we pursue idleness. No distinction is made between good men and bad, and ambition appropriates all the prizes of *virtus*. ... In the days of our *maiores* Aulus Manlius Torquatus, during the war with the Gauls, ordered the execution of his own son, because he had fought against the enemy contrary to orders, and that singular young man paid the death penalty for immoderate valor. Do you hesitate what punishment to inflict upon the most ruthless traitors?

Sallust *Bellum Catilinae* 52.7, 11, 19–23, 30–31¹⁵

Sallust, through Cato, illustrates beautifully the ability of exemplary virtue to enunciate national decline within historiographical speeches.¹⁶ Manlius Torquatus embodies the *mos maiorum*, the tree from which Cato's addressees have fallen. Of course, this employment of exemplarity could also be articulated from etic perspectives; that is, by non-Roman characters (much like Ps-Hegesippus writing about the Jews). A famous example of this comes in Hannibal's final speech, recorded near the end of Livy's fourth decade:¹⁷

¹⁴ See van Henten (forthcoming).

¹⁵ LCL 116: 120–27.

¹⁶ Langlands 2018, 295–96.

¹⁷ On Livian exemplarity see Chaplin 2000.

“Let us free the people of Rome from their lingering anxiety,” he said, “since they find it too long a process to wait for an old man’s death. But it is a victory neither great nor notable that Flaminius shall win over a man unarmed and the victim of treachery. Today will at least show how far the character of the Roman people has changed. These men’s ancestors forewarned King Pyrrhus, an enemy under arms with an army in Italy, to be on his guard against poison; but these have sent an ex-consul as an envoy to incite Prusias to the heinous act of murdering a guest.” Then, bringing down curses on Prusias’ head and his kingdom, and calling upon the gods of hospitality to witness the king’s breach of faith, he drained the cup. Such was the end of the life of Hannibal.

Livy 39.51.9–12¹⁸

Livy’s Hannibal, who saw the Romans as having helped to arrange his death, exemplifies in Roman historiography of the imperial period what Sallust had shown of the late republic: a tendency for character speeches to postulate national decline by citing a people’s *maiores*.

A final example of this tendency from Tacitus helps us cement it as a norm of the Roman historiographical tradition and also provides a helpful parallel to *De Excidio* 5.2.1. Tacitus records a debate of 40 CE revolving around whether or not to admit some Gauls (i.e., aliens) to the senate. The emperor Claudius speaks in favor of doing so, reasoning:

What else proved fatal to Lacedaemon and Athens, in spite of their power in arms, but their policy of holding the conquered aloof as alien-born? But the sagacity of our own founder Romulus was such that several times he fought and naturalized a people in the course of the same day! Strangers have been kings over us: the conferment of magistracies on the sons of freedmen is not the novelty which it is commonly and mistakenly thought, but a frequent practice of the old commonwealth.

Tacitus *Annales* 11.23–24¹⁹

Here Claudius taps the authority of Rome’s famed founder to hearken back to a pristine age whose practices ought to inform contemporary policy. In the face of looming national decline – Claudius implies that Rome is in danger of following the historical downfalls of Sparta and Athens – an *exemplum* is garnered to check that decline. Representative of Roman antiquity, Romulus represents the ultimate political-legal authority for Rome.²⁰ This use of Romulus parallels Ps-Hegesippus’ use of Hebrew heroes. Romulus is an ancient and mythical symbol of Roman antiquity. Just as Tacitus relates a historical speech citing this “Roman” hero of

¹⁸ LCL 313: 367. Cf. the “enemy speech” of C. Pontius at Livy 9.11.1–13.

¹⁹ LCL 312: 289.

²⁰ Cf. Valerius Maximus 3.2.2–3 with Roller 2018, 66.

ages past to talk about national decline, so do figures like Moses *et alia* appear in *De Excidio*.

This discussion suffices to demonstrate that, in the Roman historiographical tradition of which Ps-Hegesippus is a later part, ancestral *exempla* appear frequently in historiographical speeches as rhetorical devices capable of illustrating national decline. By late antiquity, this centuries-old practice had become a norm in every sense of the word. Therefore, for us to find Ps-Hegesippus utilizing *biblical exempla* in the same way in his history of the *Jewish* nation is in some ways not surprising; rather, it seems an eminently natural way for a late antique historian who was influenced by both classical and biblical traditions to have written. Inasmuch as Ps-Hegesippus was an educated person, he would have been educated to think and to write in exactly this way. Of course, as a Christian author drawing upon a Hellenistic Jewish text (Josephus' *Jewish War*) to write Jewish history, who the appropriate *exempla* for his history might be was a given. The heroes of the Hebrew Bible were tapped as *exempla* in Josephus' *War* (though much less frequently), and Ps-Hegesippus follows his predecessor in this combination of Greco-Roman discursive form (exemplarity) and Judeo-Christian content (biblical figures). Thus, my argument in this chapter is not that Ps-Hegesippus was *only* influenced by Roman historians in using biblical *exempla* to articulate Jewish national decline, any more than it is that he was *only* influenced by the Bible. It is both/and. Just like his source Josephus, Ps-Hegesippus combines classical and biblical worlds.

This provides an answer to one further question: Where did Ps-Hegesippus get the idea of telling the story of the Temple's destruction as a story of national Jewish decline? Certainly he could (and would) have come upon the idea by reflecting upon the classical tradition that, since Herodotus at least, tended to understand national histories in such terms. But Ps-Hegesippus did not have to come up with the idea on his own. Josephus had already done that for him. It must be admitted that Josephus introduces notions of Jewish national decline in his *Jewish War*. He opines that "the extensive Jewish defeat and the destruction of the temple were, ultimately, brought about by God as punishment of the sinful Jewish polity."²¹ In speeches that Josephus records himself as having made, he looks back to the Jews' ancestral past to imply that they had abandoned their noble beginnings. Such sentiments are the seeds of

²¹ Klawans 2012, 188.

De Excidio. Yet *De Excidio* does not voice the idea of Jewish national decline in precisely the same way as Josephus.

In a way, we could view Ps-Hegesippus' use of *exempla* at *De Excidio* 5.2.1 and elsewhere as existing within the "Third space of enunciation" into which Homi Bhabha sees all culturally constitutive proclamations as being spoken.²² Ps-Hegesippus was both heir to and in conversation with the classical and biblical texts and worlds he appropriated, and these had already been suffused previously in his main source, Flavius Josephus. But Josephus and Ps-Hegesippus did different, though partially similar, things from their respective positions of cultural hybridity: While Josephus wrote up toward or even subversively against (Roman) empire inasmuch as he represented a minority Jewish voice, Ps-Hegesippus may have seen himself as writing on behalf of the newly Christian empire of the late fourth century, even if that had been contested during Julian's reign. Josephus and Ps-Hegesippus wrote in distinct post-colonial contexts, and we should mark the colonial interface in which the two interact: While Ps-Hegesippus uses some of the same figures as Josephus, his is a brand new and, in some ways, contradictory rhetoric concerning the late Second Temple period. And his use of biblical heroes bears this out. In this chapter, then, we should remember that Ps-Hegesippus is not Josephus, and that the appearance of his erstwhile reliance upon the latter for material in his discourses of biblical exemplarity is partial and ambivalent (to adopt another of Bhabha's key terms).²³ *De Excidio* evinces a version of *the kind of thing* we sometimes find in Josephus in leveraging biblical *exempla* to make historiographical points, but Ps-Hegesippus is an independent agent within this imperially moded dynamic of discursive hierarchy, more than capable of constructing his own, very distinctive iteration of *exempla*-driven, anti-Jewish historiography, even as this rhetoric contains echoes of Josephus.

Both Josephus and Ps-Hegesippus saw the Jews of the first century, who witnessed the destruction of their Temple by the Romans, as being ethically inferior to their famous ancestors. Both authors saw this inferiority as having manifested itself in inadvisable social upheaval, which resulted in sacrilege and destruction (by themselves and others). But Josephus and Ps-Hegesippus draw differing conclusions from this.

²² Bhabha 1994, 37.

²³ One could easily imagine how the further notions of mimicry, interstice, and liminality could be helpful in sorting out *De Excidio*'s rhetorics vis-à-vis those of Josephus' *Jewish War*, though this is not the place for such a discussion.

Josephus falls in line with the Book of Deuteronomy and the Hebrew prophets: The destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem was God's punishment of his covenant people, but the "special relationship between God and Israel is not ruptured by the events of 70 CE."²⁴ Ps-Hegesippus could not disagree more strongly. For him, the destruction of Jerusalem was *precisely* the evidence of God's rejection, abandonment, cursing of the Jews. For Josephus, Jewish national decline was temporary and contingent; for Ps-Hegesippus, it was permanent and inevitable. The point of this chapter is to show how Ps-Hegesippus used biblical *exempla* to do this. Fittingly, I here make this argument from *De Excidio* 5.2, which expands considerably upon a very short few lines of Josephus' *Jewish War*, namely 5.19–20. As he addresses Jerusalem mournfully in that passage, Josephus avers that "things could possibly get better again, if ever you should atone to God, who has ravaged you" (5.19). Just when things seem bleakest for the Jews, Josephus allows for a glimpse of hope in his narrative. Ps-Hegesippus, as we will see, emphatically does not. Where Josephus hoped, Ps-Hegesippus damns.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND BIBLICAL EXEMPLA AT *DE EXCIDIO* 5.2

De Excidio 5.2 is a long address that the author dictates to a dying Jerusalem. It stands near the beginning of Book 5, in which the narrative will reach its apogee with a drawn-out presentation of Jerusalem's final destruction, making the ultimate point that God had effectively erased the Jews from history in 70 CE.²⁵ It is a striking discourse/diatribe, based upon a much shorter address in Josephus' *War* (5.19–20), combining the epideictic rhetoric of classical oratory with the influence of biblical prophetic tradition.²⁶ At the very beginning of that speech Ps-Hegesippus summons five figures from the Hebrew Bible, conjuring a veritable "cloud of witnesses":

How have you been deceived, city, by your people, to whom once you appeared glorious; how have you been conquered by your own forces, and your own hands have been turned against you, you who used to win victories without armies and used to strike the enemy without any battle taking place, when angels would

²⁴ Klawans 2012, 190.

²⁵ Bay 2021e.

²⁶ Marincola 1997, 168, notes that Josephus' version (*War* 5.19) is "striking" within ancient historiography.

contend on your behalf and the waves of the sea would fight for you along with clefts in the earth and thunder from heaven? Arise now, Moses, and behold your race and the inheritance of the people entrusted to you perishing by their own hands. Look upon this people of God, at whose advance the sea lay open for passage, for whose hunger heaven served sustenance, now confined where there is no sea, restrained without a Pharaoh, starved while the land is not barren. Arise, Aaron, you who once, when death was devouring the majority of the people because they had offended the omnipotent God, stood between the living and the dead, and death was stayed and the disease was checked by the intervention of your body, nor was it able to become a contagion among the living. You too come forth, Joshua Naue, who levelled the impenetrable walls of Jericho by means of the priests playing their trumpets, and behold the people to whom you subjugated foreigners, now themselves subjected to oppression. Come forth, David, accustomed to drive out the oppressive spirit with the sweet sound of the cithara, and behold in what manner fury holds sway and has decimated all the sweetness of your psalms to the senses of the destroyers, and how each of the leaders would offer the entire people up to death, so that he wrests liberty for himself, [a people] for which you offered your very self to death. Come forth, Elisha, who introduced the enemy into Samaria and made him a friend. Through you the din of chariots and the voice of horsemen and the voice of strength resounded in the camp of the Syrians, and the foreigner fled, and the Jew evaded destruction.

De Excidio 5.2.1²⁷

The cadre of witnesses Ps-Hegesippus summons in *De Excidio* 5.2.1 is no motley crew. It is an august crowd of deep symbolic and historical significance. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, and Elisha constitute seminal figures within Jewish history. The traditionary contexts in which they are mentioned radically configure the meaning of Ps-Hegesippus' address in 5.2 and illustrate the centrality of biblical tradition within what we will see is a classicizing use of *exempla*.

With the introduction of Moses – perhaps *the* most prominent figure within Jewish tradition – come a host of biblical intimations. Ps-Hegesippus points to “that people of God” (*populum illum dei*) that was privy to the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea in Exod 14, now “closed in where there is no sea” (*cui peruium gradienti mare patebat ... sine mari clausum*); those who experienced God's provision of manna and quail from heaven during the wilderness wanderings recorded in Exod 16 and Num 11 are now “starving while the land is not barren” (*cui esurienti escas caelum subministrabat ... sine terrarum sterilitate ieiunum*; cf. Ps 105:40); and those who received divine protections from Pharaoh throughout Exodus are now “besieged without a Pharaoh” (*sine*

²⁷ CSEL 66.1: 295.

Pharaone obsessum).²⁸ Remembered as the star of the miracles of the Red Sea, the manna and quail from heaven, and the Israelites' rescue from the Pharaoh, Moses is a representative hero, the leader of a people who experienced consistent, powerful divine protection and blessing.²⁹

More focused than the recollection of Moses' career is the story indicated in Ps-Hegesippus' introduction of Moses' brother Aaron: namely, the scene at Num 16:48 in which "death was devouring the majority of the people because they had offended the omnipotent God" (*propter offensam dei omnipotentis mors plurimos populi depascetur*), which prompted Aaron to stand *inter uiuentes ac mortuos*.³⁰ The result of Aaron's mediation was that "death was stayed and the plague clung to your [Aaron's] body" (*mors stetit atque ... corporis tui haesit lues*) so that it was not able to transfer (*transire*) from the dead to the living as *contagio*.³¹ Aaron is divine-human mediator par excellence, the high priest who stands *bodily* between God's judgment and his people.³²

Joshua belongs to a similar vintage as Moses and Aaron. In tapping his legacy Ps-Hegesippus establishes chronological sequence within his *exempla* list. He speaks to Joshua first about an easily identifiable episode: "[you] levelled the impenetrable walls of Jericho by means of the priests playing their trumpets" (*muros inexpugnabiles Hiericho sacerdotibus tuba canentibus conplanasti*).³³ Then he adds a blanket statement that could

²⁸ The tame sea and miraculous food episodes each receive a parallel mention. We may reasonably classify Ps-Hegesippus' restatements – *cui peruium gradienti mare patebat* ≈ *sine mari clausum/cui esurienti escas caelum subministrabat* ≈ *sine terrarum sterilitate ieiunum* – as instances of ancient rhetorical/oratorical *interpretatio*.

²⁹ For "the days of Moses" as a time of divine protection, see Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 9.9.5.

³⁰ Num 16:48: "He [Aaron] took his stand between the dead and the living, so that the plague (מָוֶת/θάνατος) was checked." Compare Ps-Hegesippus' *contagio* to Jerome's *plaga* (Vulg. Num 16:48). Cf. Ambrose *Ep.* 14; Wis 18.20–25.

³¹ See Somenzi 2009, 78–81, noting that Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* omits this episode.

³² Ambrose's version of Aaron in *Ep.* 4.5 (PL 16: 890) has a Christian theological twist: "And Aaron, who once stood in their midst [the Temple furnishings], threw himself forward, lest death pass into the ranks of the living from the corpses of the dead. But this one stands, even as the Word, who we do not see, within individuals, separating among us the rational faculties from the dead bodies of lethal passions and from pestilential thoughts. Here he stands, like one who has come into this world, that he might blunt the sting of death, that he might close its jaws, that he might give eternity as a gift to the living, that he might grant resurrection to the dead" (*Et Aaron quidem semel stetit in medio eorum, obiciens se, ne mors transiret ad uiuentium agmina a funeribus mortuorum. Hic autem quasi Verbum semper stat in singulis, quem nos non uidemus, intra nos separans rationabiles uirtutes a cadaueribus passionum lethalium, et pestilentium cogitationum. Hic stat, quasi qui in hunc mundum uenerit, ut aculeum mortis hebetaret, deuoratorium eius obstrueret, uiuentibus aeternitatem gratiae daret, defunctis resurrectionem concederet*).

³³ Cf. *De Excidio* 5.16.1; Somenzi 2009, 124n325.

apply effectively to any single (military) moment within Joshua's career as conqueror of Canaan in the Book of Joshua, or that could be meant to cover the entire biblical tradition of entering/conquering "the land": "you subjugated foreigners [to Israel]" (*exteros subiecisti*).³⁴ Ps-Hegesippus introduces Joshua by calling to mind the great military tradition of which Moses' famous protégé was the figurehead: Joshua is the conquering hero who took the land for Israel, beginning at the walls of Jericho.

The stories in which Ps-Hegesippus implicates King David carry a moral weight similar to that of the episode of Aaron at Num 16:48, in that they highlight the ancient hero's mediating, even expiatory role as national leader.³⁵ The reference to David's psalms and legendary musical-apotropaic abilities (e.g., 1 Sam 16:18–23) anticipates the similarly peace-bringing effect of David's mediatory prayer in 2 Samuel 24:17//1 Chronicles 21:17. In this episode Israel is experiencing a divinely sent plague; the reason is that David undertook a census of Israel, which displeased God.³⁶ During this pestilence, David interceded (2 Sam 24:17). This appears to be the episode Ps-Hegesippus has in mind³⁷ when he asks David to behold the Jewish factional *principes* offering the entire Jewish people up to death (*populum uniuersum ad mortem*) so as to distort *libertas*, whereas David offered himself for his *populus*. In *De Excidio* 5.2.1, King David is the national leader par excellence: self-sacrificing, pious, and able to ward off disaster.

Elisha's introduction in *De Excidio* 5.2.1 recalls several biblical episodes. When Ps-Hegesippus addresses Elisha as (you) "who introduced the enemy into Samaria and made him a friend" (*qui hostem introduxisti in Samariam et amicum fecisti*), he signals 2 Kgs 5, in which Naaman, "captain of the army of the king of Aram" and "a great man with his master" (2 Kgs 5:1), comes to Elisha to be healed of leprosy.³⁸

³⁴ This is codified in Josh 11:23, and potentially problematized in Josh 13:1b.

³⁵ Cf. the motif of virtuous leaders "standing in the gap" in 4 Ezra 7:106–8, where the narrator struggles with news that the end times will witness friends and family that pray only for themselves, not each other: "I answered and said: 'How then do we find that first Abraham prayed for the people of Sodom, and Moses for our ancestors who sinned in the desert, and Joshua after him for Israel in the days of Achan, and Samuel in the days of Saul, and David for the plague?'" Three of these five figures appear in *De Excidio* 5.2.1.

³⁶ 2 Sam 24:10//1 Chr 21:7.

³⁷ Somenzi 2009, 65–66; cf. Sulpicius Severus *Chron.* 1.38.8; Ambrose *Off.* 2.34.

³⁸ The Arameans had captured a little Israelite girl, who told her mistress – Naaman's wife – of "the prophet who is in Samaria" (Elisha) who would, she averred, be able to cure Naaman's leprosy (2 Kgs 5:2–4).

Eventually, Elisha heals the captain of his malady, despite the king of Israel's initial misgivings about such an Aramean entering his territory (2 Kgs 5:5–7). In this story, the prophet of Israel (Elisha) is a model of international diplomacy, whereas the king of Israel is neurotic and politically incompetent. Ps-Hegesippus subsequently reminds the reader that, through Elisha, the “din of chariots” (*quadrigarium fragor*) and the “voice of horsemen” (*uox equitum*) and the “voice of strength/valor” (*uox uirtutis*) “resounded through the camp of the Syrians, and the foreigner fled, and the Jew evaded destruction” (... *in castris Syriae ... increpuit ... fugit hostis, euasit obsidionem Iudaeus*). This recalls 2 Kgs 7, where Elisha prophesies an overturning of Israel's Aramean enemy, something subsequently effected by God via “a sound of chariots and a sound of horses and the sound of a great army.”³⁹ In *De Excidio* 5.2.1, Elisha represents divinely accompanied leadership able to excel in both peace and in war.

Together, these five heroes create a collective ideal of leadership, piety, and national pride. They are remembered as divinely sanctioned, successful, and committed to the well-being of Israel. Moses is the fearless and selfless leader of the Exodus; Aaron the selfless mediator between God and the people; Joshua a brave soldier conquering on behalf of the people; David the refined, competent, and caring monarch; and Elisha the spiritual authority and skilled foreign diplomat. Each of these characters recalls successful, productive engagement with God, in contrast to the first-century Jewish leaders who offended and alienated God by their crimes, as explored further later in this chapter.⁴⁰ Of course, within the biblical tradition, most of these heroes had major flaws.⁴¹ Many early

³⁹ Between 2 Kgs 7 and the Naaman story of 2 Kgs 5 comes 2 Kgs 6, in which Elisha alerts his servant to the presence of an apocalyptic heavenly army fighting for Israel in the sky and then prays blindness upon Israel's enemy. Ps-Hegesippus may be thinking chronologically through these episodes. Bay 2020, 187n59.

⁴⁰ My thanks to David DeVore for reminding me of this important fact.

⁴¹ To list only the most prominent examples: (1) Moses “struck the rock” that he was commanded to address, forfeiting his entrance into the promised land (Num 20:10–11; Deut 4:21; 34:4; cf. Ps 78:20–21; Aaron was also affected: Num 20:24); (2) Aaron, with his sister Miriam, complained against Moses for taking a Cushite wife, meriting God's wrath (and temporary leprosy for his sister) in Num 12; (3) David's most famous foible was his indiscretion with Bathsheba in 2 Sam 11:4 (conspicuously omitted in the Books of Chronicles); even Joshua and Elisha, two of the Hebrew Bible's most blameless leaders, can be faulted if one takes creative approaches to interpreting, e.g., (4) the Israelites' military failure at Ai (Josh 7:1–4) or (5) Elisha's wrathful response to being called “bald-head” by a group of young men (2 Kgs 2:23–24).

Christian authors were more than willing to own these shortcomings of their biblical heroes; David in particular functioned as a model of the “salvageable sinner” who proved that even repeat offenders could experience God’s grace and forgiveness.⁴² *De Excidio* has no room for such a hermeneutics (see Chapter 6). The Hebrew heroes of *De Excidio* 5.2.1 depict an idyllic past, untinged by human frailty.

Ps-Hegesippus could have presented the figures he does in a very different way. But the key interpretive insight into the rhetorical use of *exempla* is that such (re)presentations constitute narrativized ideology.⁴³ Ps-Hegesippus’ ideology entails that his Hebrew heroes, the “good guys” of his narrative, appear wholly good. Within the ideology of *De Excidio*, manifest at 5.2.1, Hebrew heroes are paragons of virtue, ideals of piety, and models for success. Only thus presented can they strike a damning juxtaposition with the first-century Jews of *De Excidio*’s narrative.

JUXTAPOSITION, CONTRAST, AND THE NARRATIVE OF JEWISH NATIONAL DECLINE

The function of the five biblical figures portrayed in *De Excidio* 5.2.1 is to illustrate the historical national decline of the Jews (implicitly *from* the Hebrews – see Chapter 2). Their attachment to particular deeds and moral valences makes them quintessential *exempla*. The nature of these deeds does not bespeak specifically Christian values. Rather, it conjures broader standards like *uirtus*, *libertas*, *fides*, *pietas*, *religio*, particularly prized and powerful within *Roman* discourse. The introduction of Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, and Elisha is explicitly couched in the language of comparison to the addressee(s) of the speech, Jerusalem and the Jewish collective it represents.

Beginning with Moses: Even before he is named in the speech, Moses is implicitly present in *De Excidio* 5.2.1 via the opening line’s reference to episodes from the Exodus narrative. Upon summoning Moses (*Exsurge nunc, Moyses*), the narrator further recalls the Israelites’ miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, reception of bread from heaven (manna) in the wilderness, and protection from the twin threats of Pharaoh’s army and starvation in a barren desert. Moses embodies a past in which the

⁴² Krueger 2014 discusses how between the sixth and ninth centuries “[s]criptural narrative afforded opportunities to recognize oneself among the Biblical sinners, for whom there was hope even in their sinful flaws” (2).

⁴³ Eisenbaum 1997, 380.

Jews' predecessors enjoyed divine protection and provision and national confidence.

These Mosaic scenes from Israelite history strike an immediate contrast with the Jerusalem and Jews being discussed, observed, and addressed at *De Excidio* 5.2. Where the ancient Israelites were protected from all national disasters by God, his angels, and nature itself, the Jews whose destruction Ps-Hegesippus narrates embody the reverse. Consider the topic of military strength. At the beginning of *De Excidio* 5.2, Ps-Hegesippus casts the ancient Israelites as having been immune from Pharaoh's onslaught (*sine Pharaone obsessum*). In stark contrast, later he introduces the Jews of 70 CE as vulnerable both to the stronger (*fortiores*) Roman army and to themselves:

Therefore rebellion holds sway within you, peace has been buried, so that you may perish because of your own [people] more cruelly than if you were to perish at the hands of others. How much has the Roman done to you with his weapons, you wretched city, compared to what evils your own populace has introduced? Since you contended with the Romans, your own [people] have wrought this. The Romans desired peace, you have declared war. What cause was there that you should provoke those stronger than you?

De Excidio 5.2.1⁴⁴

According to the logic of the speech, the ancient Israelites under Moses withstood the most powerful king on earth; the later Jews, on the other hand, not only proved easy prey to the great Roman war machine, but were internally *self*-destructive. This juxtaposition of ancient Israelite invincibility and modern Jewish vulnerability also contains the implicit theme of divine approbation versus disapprobation. Whereas the ancient Israelites had received divine provision, blessing, and protection – the essence of the Exodus narrative and the Israelites' deliverance from Pharaoh – the Jews have been explicitly abandoned, even opposed, by God. Another point of contrast is the provision of manna to the ancient Israelites, whereas famine is a key theme in *De Excidio*'s depiction of Jerusalem's besiegement throughout *De Excidio* Book 5. But none of this should be surprising. Ps-Hegesippus reflects: "It is no wonder if a people who has turned away from God and follows after the vile spirit of opposition has been divided against itself."⁴⁵ The ancestors of the Jews, represented in Moses and crystallized in their formative Exodus experience, are very different from the Jews. The latter are a decadent reminder of their ancestors' grandeur.

⁴⁴ CSEL 66.1: 297.

⁴⁵ *De Excidio* 5.2.1.

Aaron is an *exemplum* of the religious vitality of ancient Israel and the ritual leadership necessary for its civic health.⁴⁶ At *De Excidio* 5.2.1 he is presented as one who stood *inter uiuentes ac mortuos* when, because of their having offended God, the people were plagued by death (*mors*). The pious, self-sacrificial leadership exemplified in Aaron is conspicuously absent in the Jerusalem Ps-Hegesippus describes. The chief priests of *De Excidio*'s 70 CE setting – Ananus and Jesus, ostensibly Aaron's latter-day counterparts – lie unburied in Jerusalem according to *De Excidio* 5.2.1: *iacerunt in te Ananus et Iesus insepulti sacerdotum principes*. First-century Jerusalem is without robust religious leadership. In fact, it had virtuous leadership in Ananus, but rejected it: Elsewhere in 5.2.1, Ps-Hegesippus asks, "But what reason was there for the death of Ananus ...?"⁴⁷ The Jerusalem Ps-Hegesippus describes is a far cry from the Israel of former times, in which Aaron's rod still blossomed, a manifest symbol of divine presence among the people (with possible Homeric connotations): "Yes, before them the priestly staff blossomed even though cut off from its wooden root, but now faith withers and piety has been buried and all emulation of virtue is departed."⁴⁸ The priestly staff does not bud for the Jewish addressees of 5.2: They are a nation fallen from grace and lacking *fides*, *pietas*, and *aemulatio uirtutis*.

Joshua's legacy was one of military conquest – indeed, *the* conquest in the Jewish imagination. He represents a time when God's presence with the Israelites was manifest in military success. Ps-Hegesippus says to Joshua of the Israelites: "you subjected others to them" (*cui exteros subiecisti*). How ironic that now the descendants of these Israelites are subject to oppression (*nunc eundem subiectum opprimi*). The contrast that Joshua embodies shines forth within a Jerusalem undergoing destruction:

What did you think would happen, when with your own hands you crucified your own salvation, with your own hands extinguished your own life, with your own voices banished your own advocate, amid your own domestic disturbances killed your own ally, but that you also would turn your hands against yourself? ... How much has the Roman done to you with his weapons, you wretched city,

⁴⁶ In the Roman world the relationship between the gods or a god and the *ciuitas* or a given *populus* – always mediated by specialist leaders – was closely attached to a city's well-being, at once what we would call "political" and "religious."

⁴⁷ *De Excidio* 5.2.1.

⁴⁸ *De Excidio* 5.2.1 (CSEL 66.1: 298: *Ante et uirga sacerdotalis floruit recisa de siluestri radice, nunc et fides aret et sepulta est pietas et abiit omnis uirtutis aemulatio*). Cf. Homer *Iliad* 1.225–44.

compared to what evils your own populace has introduced? Since you contended with the Romans, your own [people] have wrought this. The Romans desired peace, you have declared war. What cause was there that you should provoke those stronger than you? ... Therefore you paid a fitting price for your perfidy, Jerusalem, when you yourself destroyed your ramparts with your own hands, when you tore out your entrails with your own swords, so that the enemy had pity on you, so that he spared, you raged. For he saw that God fought against you and had engaged himself on behalf of the Romans, and how you were voluntarily inflicting betrayal upon yourself. And it was for this reason that the Romans preferred to be spectators rather than destroyers, lest while you were raging internally amongst yourselves a force of contagion rather than of military strength might be perceived to come forth.

De Excidio 5.2.1⁴⁹

Compared to Israelite antiquity, first-century Jerusalem is backward. Conquering besiegers (Hebrews) have devolved into the conquered and besieged (Jews). Rather than overtaking others, the Jews are overtaken, something exacerbated by the fact that the primary foe of the Jews is not another nation, but the Jews themselves. No heroic leader stands out to lead God's people in 70 CE Jerusalem, although the many self-styled leaders of the various factions present a ready-made farce against the backdrop of Joshua. Militarily successful and divinely sanctioned, Joshua strengthens Ps-Hegesippus' portrait of Jewish national decline.

David's presence in *De Excidio* 5.2.1 carries some of the same weight as Joshua's: His military and political legacy also marked a high point of Jewish history. Yet Ps-Hegesippus decides to highlight a metaphysical – even apotropaic – aspect of David's legacy. Ps-Hegesippus remembers David as one “accustomed to drive out the oppressive spirit with the sweet sound of his cithara” (*exasperantem spiritum citharae suauitate solitus excludere*). By the first century, however, *furor* has abolished all the sweetness of David's psalms (*omnem suauitatem psalmorum tuorum*) and whatever effect they might have had on those destroying the city. These are the leaders (*principes*) of the city, each of whom is willing to wrest away *libertas* and offer the *populus uniuersus* to death (*ad mortem*), in direct contrast to David who, as Ps-Hegesippus recalls, offered himself in place of a plagued Jerusalem when divine punishment had struck. This contrast is complex. While David was a divinely gifted cultivator of peace, willing to put himself between the destruction of divine wrath and Jerusalem's *populus*, the leaders of first-century Jerusalem become *themselves*, in a way, the vehicle of divine wrath. Far from cultivating

⁴⁹ CSEL 66.1: 296.

peace, they manufacture *immanitas*, *crudelitas*, *contumelia*, *seditio*. How different David is from them.

With the introduction of David we find the most explicit contrast made in *De Excidio* 5.2 between the inciters of the rebellion in 70 CE Judea/Jerusalem – the *principes* – and ancient Israel’s exemplary leadership. The first-century Jewish *principes* wrench *libertas* from others to their own ends, whereas David threw himself in harm’s way for the people of Israel and, indeed, to save the city of Jerusalem (2 Sam 24:16a//1 Chr 21:15a). And David’s symbolic connection to Jerusalem⁵⁰ is strengthened when, later on in the speech of *De Excidio* 5.2, Ps-Hegesippus uses David to highlight the prophetic aspect of the events he interprets in a quotation of Psalm 79:1–3 (which he ascribes to David). After relating how the Temple has become a scene of death, we read:

But had not David said of these things: “they have polluted your holy Temple, they have set out the bodies of your servants as meals for the birds of heaven, they have poured out their blood like water in a circuit around Jerusalem and there was no one to bury them?”

De Excidio 5.2.1⁵¹

David enters *De Excidio* 5.2.1 as a psalmist – a prophetic poet who can speak truth to horror and who represents the perceptive, wise leadership of a manifestly bygone age. David had the heart, skills, and vision to lead and protect his people. Pointing out that the Jewish leaders in 70 CE Jerusalem lack all of these things drives home once again the theme of national decline.

As with David, the rhetorical semantics of Elisha’s character in *De Excidio* 5.2.1 are multifarious. His is perhaps the most poignant witness of all. Elisha’s historical value as *exemplum* works on two levels. On the one hand, Elisha stands for an Israelite leadership that could effect favorable diplomacy; that is, Elisha was able to turn *hostis* into *amicus* when he invited Naaman the Syrian into Samaria (2 Kgs 5). On the other hand, when diplomacy was not expedient, Elisha was able to garner supernatural power to solve national dilemmas: Ps-Hegesippus avers that Judea (“the Jew”) evaded siege/destruction (*euasit obsidionem Iudaeus*) when the din of chariots (*quadrigarum fragor*) and the sound of cavalry (*uox equitum*) and the sound of strength (*uox uirtutis*) crashed through (*increpuit*) the camp of the Syrians (*in castris Syriae*). How was

⁵⁰ Cf. *De Excidio* 1.1.8; 5.9.1.

⁵¹ CSEL 66.1: 300.

this effected? “Through you” (*per te*), Ps-Hegesippus says, addressing Elisha (alluding to 2 Kgs 7). Whether in war or diplomacy, Elisha proved himself a (divinely) capable leader.

Elisha’s presentation is ironic in its stark contrast with the Jewish leaders of 70 CE. First of all, Ps-Hegesippus’ history is a history of the *obsidio*, the siege of Jerusalem. This is something Elisha helped the nation avoid, whereas the first-century Jews effectively bring it upon themselves. Ps-Hegesippus charges the Jews in Jerusalem with sedition (*seditio*) that occurs “amidst your domestic disturbances” (*tuis infestationibus*). In terms of diplomacy, Ps-Hegesippus explicitly names the failure of his first-century Jews: You provoked the Romans, so they attacked; they wanted peace, you wanted war; why did you pick a fight you could not win? Where Elisha befriended or defeated national enemies, the first-century Jewish leaders provoke them, to their peril. Elisha, then, like his fellow Hebrew heroes, embodies the exact opposite of those first-century Jews who occupy Ps-Hegesippus’ narrative. He illustrates a picture of national decline.

Together, the five heroes mentioned in *De Excidio* 5.2.1 create an ancestral pastiche, a static snapshot of Israel’s past that collapses personalities and time periods into an antiquarian utopia.⁵² This cloud of witnesses stands in absolute antonymy with the Jews of the first century. That this is the intended rhetorical valence of the five heroes is reinforced by the historical summary of national decline that comes later in the speech. Mid-speech Ps-Hegesippus provides a virtually all-encompassing run-through of a national past that contrasts starkly with 70 CE Jerusalem. Here we find a clear statement of national decline. In the speech’s latter half, Ps-Hegesippus asks Jerusalem directly: “Where is this your liberty (*ubi est illa libertas tua*) ... where this faith of the Maccabees (*ubi est illa Macchabaeorum fides*)?” These moral qualities that the first-century Jews manifestly lacked, and the Hebrews/Jews of old manifestly possessed according to *De Excidio*, are each matched to a sequential list of historical allusions. Concerning *libertas*, Ps-Hegesippus alleges that out of the “desire” (*studio*) for liberty the Jews’ ancestors had refused to give way to the Egyptians, the Palestinians, the Assyrians, and the Medes. Regarding *fides*, Ps-Hegesippus avers that this character quality among the Jews’ ancestors overcame the Babylonians, the Persians, and the

⁵² For the Romans, the *mos maiorum* was embodied within the totality of earlier national *exempla*, a chronologically disparate group made into one; see Hölkeskamp 1996; also Walter 2004, 55.

Seleucids. He combines these traits in the idea of *deuotio patrum*, “the zeal of your ancestors” – what we might call “patriotism” – which, for Ps-Hegesippus, marks the moral chasm separating proto-Jewish antiquity from first-century Judaism.⁵³ This *deuotio patrum* represents the collective force of Ps-Hegesippus’ *exempla* at *De Excidio* 5.2.1; it represents the *mos maiorum* embodied in the ancient Israelites, the historical pinnacle from which the Jewish nation has declined. This contrast of past nobility versus present depravity, embodied in contrasts of *libertas*, *fides*, *deuotio* (and *pietas*), makes a blaring statement, filtered through the succinct yet damning question that Ps-Hegesippus then accusingly asks of Jerusalem concerning such nobility: *ubi est illa*, “Where is it?” For the Christian author Ps-Hegesippus, these values are absent among the people who rejected and killed Jesus Christ.

The reader apprised of *historia Judaica* will recognize that this survey, contained in the address of *De Excidio* 5.2.1, covers just about all of it up to the rabbinic period. Painting in broad strokes, Ps-Hegesippus refers to Egyptians (Israel’s earliest narrative foe), Palestinians (Canaanites or Philistines),⁵⁴ Assyrians, and Medes. Together, these peoples and their past relationships with Israel signify ancient Israel’s capacity to gain and retain independence from the Middle Bronze Age until the Persian period. These four peoples more or less comprehensively cover ancient Israel’s primary antagonists within the biblical (and the historical) record. The Babylonians, Persians, and Seleucids cover the sixth through second centuries BCE of ancient Israel’s national security. In other words, in *De Excidio* 5.2.1 Ps-Hegesippus recalls all of Jewish history in one all-encompassing, honorific relief. (One can imagine Ps-Hegesippus’ stepped narrative portrayed on a triumphal column like that of Trajan or Marcus Aurelius in Rome, or that of Constantine in Constantinople.) He then weighs the freight of that great tradition against what he has postured as the *final* Jewish generation; that is, the generation of Jesus and briefly thereafter. One way to demonstrate Jewish national decline is to stress the positive character traits that *all* of Jewish national history possessed in common – exemplified in five biblical *exempla* cited by name – but the “present” Jewish generation does not. The collective moral weight of the Hebrew/Israelite/Jewish past looms menacingly over Jerusalem in the speech of *De Excidio* 5.2. The strong impression left upon the reader is the historical notion of Jewish national decline.

⁵³ Cf. here the reference to zeal and the exemplarity operative in Mattathias’ speech of 1 Macc 2:51–60.

⁵⁴ Bay 2020, 197n86.

BIBLICAL EXEMPLA BETWEEN CHRYSOSTOM,
AMBROSE, AND PSEUDO-HEGESIPPUS

Ps-Hegesippus' combination of biblical *exempla* and the theme of Jewish national decline within the literary context of historiographical speech-writing has several parallels. Examining these parallels helps us frame Ps-Hegesippus within the classical and biblical cultural context of late antique Christianity. We begin with the fourth-century authors who are perhaps most closely aligned with Ps-Hegesippus both in time and in ideology: namely, John Chrysostom and Ambrose of Milan.

John Chrysostom and Ambrose are figureheads of Christian oratory in the late fourth century, when *De Excidio* was written, and they both share with Ps-Hegesippus a stark anti-Judaism and an erstwhile communicative context for voicing anti-Jewish sentiments: namely, oratory.⁵⁵ As preachers, Chrysostom and Ambrose frequently made arguments by way of public speaking; Ps-Hegesippus, similar yet different, makes many of his arguments in the context of character speeches or, just this once at *De Excidio* 5.2, by means of a second-person address given by the author himself. Thus, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Ps-Hegesippus all articulate anti-Jewish sentiments within oratorical frameworks. Yet, for all their similarities, one massive difference stands out. Chrysostom and Ambrose, as churchmen with ecclesial and theological preoccupations, routinely steer their *exempla* toward themes of Christian doctrine, morality, and ritual. These topics explicitly frame the *exempla* they use and the larger discourses in which they figure. Ps-Hegesippus, on the other hand, uses his *exempla* in a far more classical way, addressing standard themes of Roman discourse: *uirtus*, *libertas*, *deuotio*, *aemulatio*, *fides*, *pietas*, *religio*, and so on. As Dominique Estève once noted, Ps-Hegesippus in his vocabulary “represents well a cultural ideal which conjoins Classical contribution and Christian innovation.”⁵⁶ This is nowhere truer than in *De Excidio* 5.2 with its emphasis on Jewish national decline.

Thus, while Chrysostom and Ambrose routinely employ some of the *exempla* found in *De Excidio* 5.2.1, they do so in ways that strike a marked contrast to Ps-Hegesippus. Two good texts for comparison are Chrysostom's *Discourses against Judaizing Christians* and Ambrose's

⁵⁵ Wilken 1983 (Chrysostom); Doerfler 2011 (Ambrose).

⁵⁶ “Ainsi plus encore par son vocabulaire que par sa syntaxe, Hégésippe est bien le représentant idéal d’une culture qui conjugue l’apport Classique et l’innovation chrétienne.” Estève 1987, XIX, on *uirtus*, *pietas*, *fides*, and other terms.

On the Duties of the Clergy.⁵⁷ J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz has described the process of “Christianization” within Ambrose’s *De Officiis*, based on Cicero’s eponymous work:

The most conspicuous form of Christianization is the replacing of Cicero’s exempla, taken from Roman history, entirely by exempla taken from the Bible. The Christianization of exempla by itself inevitably results in important changes in the moral advice that they exemplify. So Ambrose’s discussion of “courage” and “greatness of mind” is obviously developed from Cicero’s treatment of the same subject. But while Cicero’s examples are taken from Greek and Roman history those of Ambrose are taken from the Bible. This of course involves a change of emphasis and the insertion of values that are specifically Christian.⁵⁸

In a vein of similar yet different, John Chrysostom, whom Liebeschuetz describes as “not really interested in theology” and “basically a pastor and minister, who saw it as his duty to save souls by reforming morals,” also employs a new, Christian brand of *exempla*; for him, the “models to be followed are not the famous *exempla* of classical literature, but the martyrs”⁵⁹ in addition to the biblical models he often cites. Both Ambrose and Chrysostom, in other words, use their inter-textual *exempla* to purvey Christian morality, ethics, and virtue. Thus, both put King David forward as the model penitent sinner: His humility and repentance before the prophet Nathan after the Bathsheba-Uriah episode embody Christian meekness and the need for confession (for Ambrose, this explains the relationship between emperor and priest).⁶⁰ King David never appears thus in Ps-Hegesippus. Nor do Ps-Hegesippus’ *exempla* serve the didactic purpose of illustrating overtly Christian *praxis*. The exemplarity on display at *De Excidio* 5.2 is *not* the Christian norm.

Despite its singularity, we can track other similarities between Ps-Hegesippus’ use of biblical *exempla* at the beginning of *De Excidio* 5.2.1 and the deployment of *exempla* in Chrysostom. Consider how Chrysostom begins his *Discourses*:

⁵⁷ Chrysostom’s Greek from PG 48, translations from Harkins 1979; Ambrose’s text/translation from Davidson 2001.

⁵⁸ Liebeschuetz 2011, 79.

⁵⁹ Liebeschuetz 2011, 251, also 194–95.

⁶⁰ See both of Ambrose’s *Apologies for David* (*De apologia prophetae David*); Liebeschuetz 2011, 80–82, 256. Ambrose famously put into action his principle that even kings need to be subject to religious leaders, an idea for which he saw David as the embodiment, with Theodosius in a letter written to him in 390 CE (*Ep.* 51; see Sozomen *Hist. Eccl.* 7.24; Liebeschuetz 2011, 90). For Chrysostom, see *Comparatio regis et monachi* 2.2–3; *De paenitentia*; Liebeschuetz 2011, 164.

Today I had intended to complete my discussion of the topic on which I spoke to you a few days ago; I wished to present you with even clearer proof that God's nature is more than our minds can grasp. Last Sunday I spoke on this great length and I brought forward as my witnesses Isaiah, David, and Paul.

Adversus Iudaeos 1.1.1.⁶¹

Chrysostom, like Ps-Hegesippus at *De Excidio* 5.2.1, will employ biblical *exempla* within lists. Here he identifies three biblical figures as “witnesses” (μάρτυροι). Ambrose, of course, will do the same; in fact, his *De Officiis* is one long list of (largely biblical) *exempla*. Example lists were in fact a typical way of deploying ancestral *exempla* in both Greco-Roman discourse (think Valerius Maximus) and the Judeo-Christian milieu (i.e., Hebrews 11).⁶² Yet again, even while Chrysostom and Ambrose exude a certain kinship to Ps-Hegesippus in listing *exempla*, the focus of their usage signals a deep-seated difference. When Chrysostom “brings forward” (παρηγάγομεν) his witnesses at the beginning of his *Discourses* – Isaiah, David, and Paul – he is actually referring to the biblical books attributed to these figures: Isaiah = the Book of Isaiah, David = the Psalms, and Paul = the Pauline Epistles. This becomes clear when Chrysostom immediately proceeds to quote Isa 53:8, Ps 138:14, Ps 138:6, and Rom 11:33.⁶³ These passages are presented as things that Isaiah and Paul “exclaimed” (ἐβόα, ἐβόησεν) and David “said” (πύχαρίσται ... λέγων). This might be called a “textual” or “scriptural” mode of biblical exemplarity: Biblical *exempla* become stand-ins for Scripture. This habit appears throughout Chrysostom's *Discourses* and other homilies and is likewise a tendency in Ambrose's *De Officiis*.⁶⁴ Ps-Hegesippus only ever does this with David and Daniel and in rather specialized contexts. On the whole, Ps-Hegesippus does *not* display a tendency to introduce biblical *exempla* as biblical authors: The usual suspects of other early Christian literature in this regard, figures like Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Solomon, Job, never

⁶¹ Harkins 1979, 1.

⁶² See Cosby 1988; Eisenbaum 1996; Roller 2015.

⁶³ All in *Adversus Iudaeos* 1.1.1.

⁶⁴ In Chrysostom, e.g., Moses often appears as speaker or writer of biblical text (*Adversus Iudaeos* 1.2.5; 1.5.4; 1.7.7–8; 1.8.1; 3.3.6,8; 3.5.5; 4.4.6; 4.7.5; 5.3.3; 5.5.2; 5.6.1–2; 5.12.4–5,8; 7.5.11; cf. *Hom.* 12.10, where Moses = Law), as does David as psalmist (*Adversus Iudaeos* 1.1.1; 7.3.4–6; 7.4.1–2). Cf. *Hom.* 10.8, where David, Isaiah, and Paul again appear in a relief similar to that of *Adversus Iudaeos* 1.1.1. Ambrose also introduces as figures qua biblical authors, e.g., David (= Psalms at *Off.* 1.7.23; 1.10.31; 1.14.52; 1.23.133; 1.25.118; 1.45.230; 1.49.254; 1.50.255; 2.2.6; 2.8.43; 3.1.1–2; 3.10.66; 3.11.75; = 1 Sam 1:23 at 3.22.131), Moses (= Deuteronomy at *Off.* 1.50.266), Solomon (= Proverbs at *Off.* 2.8.44; 3.1.1).

star as biblical authors in *De Excidio*. This points to a larger contrast between Ps-Hegesippus and many other ancient Christian authors: He is not performing exegesis per se. Ps-Hegesippus does not overtly engage the biblical interpretation expected, even demanded, of homiletic or ecclesial contexts. He is writing *history*. His hermeneutics are those typified by classical literature, wherein authors mention figures from the past as historical instantiations of particular virtues. Ps-Hegesippus' biblical *exempla* are heroes of history, not the inspired scribes of the Scriptures.

None of this means that Ps-Hegesippus held to a worldview fundamentally different than that of a Chrysostom or an Ambrose. The literary genres and rhetorical contexts into which these authors inserted themselves can explain their mutual connections and their idiosyncrasies. Ps-Hegesippus' chosen genre of classically construed historiography did not invite him to engage with the hermeneutical debates and ecclesial mores driving Chrysostom when the latter, for example,

insists that the stories of Noah's Ark and of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac are records of actual historical events, but in addition they are able to prefigure (respectively) Christ and the Church, and the Crucifixion. In the same way Aaron and Eli are Old Testament examples and warnings for the priesthood of the Christian church.⁶⁵

Ps-Hegesippus discusses some of these same figures, but not in these ways. Even when we find Ps-Hegesippus and Ambrose citing the same passage, even with the common aim of exemplifying *uirtus*, stark differences assert themselves. Ambrose states:

What about Aaron? Did he ever think himself happier than he did at that moment when he stood between the living and the dead, using his own person as a barrier to stop death in its tracks, to prevent it passing from the bodies of the dead to the ranks of the living?

De Officiis 2.4.11⁶⁶

Ambrose cites the episode of Num 16:48, which Ps-Hegesippus uses at *De Excidio* 5.2.1. And he uses much the same language. But the two passages do not say the same thing. In *De Excidio*, Aaron, alongside other *exempla*, communicates national decline within a historian's speech; in

⁶⁵ Court 2003, 48, citing Chrysostom *Disc. Laz.* 6.7; *Expositiones in Psalmos* 46; *De sacerdotio* 4.1.357.

⁶⁶ Davidson 2001, 1.275–76: *Quid Aaron? Quando beatiorem se credit quam tunc, quando medius stetit inter vivos ac mortuos et obiectu sui statuit mortem, ne ad vivorum transiret agmina a cadaveribus mortuorum? Verbatim and very close correspondences between Ambrose and De Excidio 5.2.1 signaled here.*

De Officiis, Aaron serves alongside Daniel, Moses, and Elijah within a systematic work on overtly Christian virtues to illustrate the principle of happiness (*beatitudo*) in the midst of suffering as prescribed by Christian Scriptures.⁶⁷ For Ps-Hegesippus, the Aaron of Num 16:48 is an ancient paragon of priestly national leadership, a *retrospective exemplum* applied *negatively* to the Jewish *collective*; for Ambrose, this very same Aaron is an object lesson prompting happiness in suffering, a *prospective exemplum* applied *positively* to the Christian *individual*. Ps-Hegesippus and Ambrose cite the same biblical personality and passage of Scripture, but the Aarons with which they present their readers are two very different rhetorical *exempla*.

This brief discussion of Chrysostom and Ambrose congeals into a principle: Ps-Hegesippus' use of biblical *exempla* is eminently intelligible within Christian late antiquity, yet is in ways an unusual expression of that milieu. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, and Elisha are well-worn topics within Chrysostom, Ambrose, and late ancient Christian literature generally.⁶⁸ For Ps-Hegesippus to cite them, even as a group, is unexceptional: This is a group of *exempla* one expects a late antique Christian author to tap. But to cite them as historical characters and *not* as biblical authors, allegories, or models for Christian orthodoxy or orthopraxy is distinctive. Authors like Chrysostom and Ambrose talked about biblical figures in niche discussions of Christian topics: asceticism and monasticism, chastity and virginity, domesticity and clerical polity.⁶⁹ *De Excidio* is interested in none of these. Because Ps-Hegesippus writes in a literary genre not thematically representative of late antique Christian literature – that is, classical historiography – his biblical *exempla* have a tone and style all their own. The *exempla* Ps-Hegesippus uses to illustrate Jewish national decline at *De Excidio* 5.2.1 are at once stock figures of a wider tradition and novelties of his own creativity.

⁶⁷ See, e.g., Ambrose *Off.* 2.3.8–2.4.14.

⁶⁸ See Chrysostom *Adversus Iudaeos* 1.2.5, 1.5.4, 1.7.7–8, 1.8.1; 3.3.6, 8, 3.5.5; 4.4.6, 4.7.5; 5.3.3, 5.5.2, 5.6.1–2, 5.12.4–5, 8; 6.2.6–7, 10, 6.4.5–6, 6.5.7–9, 6.6.1–2, 4–5; 7.2.8, 7.4.5, 7.5.11; 8.6.10–11 (Moses); 5.4.4, 5.11.7; 6.5.7–9, 6.6.1–4; 7.4.4, 6, 7.5.2, 8–9 (Aaron); 1.1.1; 7.2.4–7, 7.3.4, 6, 7.4.1–2, 7.5.1–3; 8.4.10 (David); Ambrose *Off.* 1.66, 80, 123, 133–35, 139, 179, 202, 246, 251, 257; 2.10, 13, 31, 56–57, 98–99; 3.2, 55, 79, 92–95, 101, 108 (Moses); 1.80; 2.11; 3.79, 92, 101 (Aaron); 1.139, 175, 196; 2.98, 129–30; 3.54–55, 67, 69 (Joshua); 1.1–2, 6–7, 9–10, 15, 21, 23, 31, 34, 52, 94, 96, 114, 118, 133, 167, 171, 175, 177, 214, 221, 236, 245–46; 2.6, 20, 32, 35–36, 38, 43, 94, 114–15; 3.1–2, 33, 59–62, 66, 75, 132 (David); 1.139–40, 149, 206; 2.100; 3.5–6, 86–88, 119–20 (Elisha); Davidson 2001, 2.973–82.

⁶⁹ See Maxwell 2006, 131; J. W. Smith 2011, 88.

JEWISH NATIONAL DECLINE BETWEEN EPHREM,
EPIPHANIUS, AND PSEUDO-HEGESIPPUS

Many early Christian authors posited a distinction between the ancestors of the Jews (often “Hebrews” or “Israelites”) and later Jews, often concentrating upon the Jews of the first century (see [Chapter 2](#)). Often, this differentiation accompanied narratives of decline, which appear already in the first and second centuries CE.⁷⁰ Eusebius presents a well-known example of a Christian author differentiating between the ancient Hebrews who preceded the Torah and the Jews who represent post-Mosaic times, a differentiation that amounts to a narrative of national decline, what Aaron Johnson terms a “narrative of descent.”⁷¹ Other late antique authors put their own spin on the theme of Jewish national decline. One reason for the proliferation of this kind of narrative was that it was necessary to support Christians’ claim upon the Jewish Scriptures and its heroes as their own while denying the validity of the Jews’ claim to be descendants of the people of God. Ephrem and Epiphanius both constructed narratives of Jewish decline along these lines. And indeed, they, like Ps-Hegesippus, employed key biblical figures to concretize this narrative. Where they differ is in their respective configurations of the story of Jewish national decline.

As a deacon, hymnographer, and theologian in fourth-century Edessa, the Syriac-speaking Ephrem was first and foremost concerned with Christian doctrine, liturgy, and behavior. As Elena Narinskaya has argued, these preoccupations were Ephrem’s primary concern in dealing with Jewish traditions and history.⁷² To use Jewish tradition to inform the Syriac Church, however, Ephrem needed to distinguish between the “good” and the “bad” of Jewish history, between what was worthy of emulation and what was blameworthy and suitable only as a *negative* model for Christians. This led Ephrem to develop a particular version of Jewish decline. Christine Shepardson has shown how the infamous golden calf incident of Exodus 32 becomes a central dividing point within Jewish history for Ephrem.⁷³ It is at that point in Jewish history at which “Ephrem ... defines two lines of ancestry for Israel (and for his own

⁷⁰ E.g. the *Epistle of Barnabas* and Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho*. [Fredriksen and Irshai 2006](#), 977, 982. Melito of Sardis’ second-century *Peri Pascha* also insinuates (vociferously) a decline from “Israel” to “Judaism,” reinforced by a stark then (ποτέ) vs. now (νῦν δέ) language: [Lieu 1996](#), 217.

⁷¹ [Johnson 2006](#), viii; see also [Ulrich 1999](#), 83; [Kofsky 1996](#).

⁷² [Narinskaya 2010](#).

⁷³ [Shepardson 2008](#), 54–88, 95–96.

community): the descendants of the good and spiritually pure Moses, and the descendants of the rejected and defiled Jewish people.” Moses becomes a powerful biblical *exemplum* by which Ephrem can manipulate a hermetic divide between former-day and latter-day Jews. But Moses is not the only figure to formalize this historical–chronological dualism for Ephrem. As Shepardson again explains:

That Ephrem identifies a line of faithful Jews who rose above the rest of the Jewish people is clear from his frequent references to certain pillars within the tradition of Israel, such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, whom Ephrem frequently raises up as positive models for Christian behavior. The harsh language with which Ephrem refers to the Jewish people as a whole emphasizes that these heroes stand in stark contrast to the rest of the Jews throughout history.⁷⁴

Just like Ps-Hegesippus, and with some of the same heroes, Ephrem employs biblical *exempla* to posit a self-serving narrative of Jewish national decline.

Similar to Ephrem, Young Richard Kim has illustrated how Epiphanius concocts a “sweeping reimagining of primordial and Biblical history” in his *Medicine Chest* (i.e., the *Panarion*).⁷⁵ Entering a pan-Mediterranean contest of totalizing knowledge wherein authors sought to define and situate self and other on a global scale, Epiphanius the heresiologist constructed a worldview that could deal with Jews, Christians, and others in a comfortable taxonomy.⁷⁶ Among other things, this resulted in a narrative of Jewish national decline. For Epiphanius, one prong of human depravity’s “long, slow, but steady descent into mistaken beliefs and mistaken practices” involved Judaism’s falling away from patriarchal perfection into heresy as they denied Christ and thereby betrayed a misunderstanding of their own Scriptures:

Using Scripture as his starting point, [Epiphanius] constructed a narrative of the human experience from its beginnings in an original, pure state of existence in which the prime man, Adam, knew and believed in a Triune God. After the Fall,

⁷⁴ Shepardson 2008, 88–89 (also 95, 105). This is made explicit in Ephrem’s *Sermons on Faith* 3.251–58. See further on Ephrem’s employment of Moses in this: *Hymns on the Crucifixion* 8.9; *De Domino nostri* 6.17; *Hymns on the Church* 41.1–5; *Hymns on Fasting* 10.4; *Hymns on the Nativity* 14.19; *Hymns on Virginity* 49.13; on David, see *Hymns on the Church* 41.1–5; *Hymns on the Nativity* 24.14. Note that Ephrem also discusses Aaron, whom he exonerates from blame in the golden calf incident at *Comm. Ex.* 32.2. Ephrem also shares with *De Excidio* 5.2.1 the motif of Jews killing the prophets (*Hymns on Nisibis* 27.10; 67.3–12; *Hymns on Virginity* 28.9).

⁷⁵ Kim 2015, 79, and 74–80 for what follows. Cf. Epiphanius *Panarion* 4.2.2 (*De Excidio* Prol 3); 4.7.5; 5.5.4.

⁷⁶ Cf. Jacobs 2016, 132–75.

human depravity began a long, slow, but steady descent into mistaken beliefs and mistaken practices. This was a simple world in which piety and impiety and natural law and human freedom soon gave way to two broad heretical trajectories. The first was Hellenism ... The second trajectory of human depravity was Judaism, and here Epiphanius focused on the patriarchs, who maintained the right belief in a Triune God even after having received the Law and whose descendants fell into heresy when they failed to recognize the prophecies and types of Christ revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures and fulfilled in the Incarnation.⁷⁷

In a similar vein but on a different scale than Ps-Hegesippus or Ephrem, Epiphanius erects a narrative of Jewish national decline wherein Jewish history reifies a chronological metric for human depravity. Yet as with Ephrem and Ps-Hegesippus, so with Epiphanius: The tree from which the Jewish apple progressively falls consists in the heroes of the Jewish Scriptures, in his case the patriarchs. Thus, Epiphanius relates how the Jews were first called “Abramians” after the pious patriarch Abraham (cf. *De Excidio* 5.53.1), then “Israelites” after the name of Jacob, and then, in the time of King David, “Jews.” He also includes Moses in his narrative of national decline as an *exemplum* of spiritual pedagogy and piety as embodied in the Law. Epiphanius even, like Ps-Hegesippus, began his tracing of Jewish history with the successors of the tribe of Judah.

In Ephrem, Epiphanius, and Ps-Hegesippus we find narratives of Jewish national decline catalyzed with reference to ancient *exempla* from biblical history. Whether in service of dogmatic, theological, and ecclesial instruction (Ephrem’s *Hymns*), heresiological and apologetic taxonomy (Epiphanius’ *Panarion*), or historiographical intra-narrative oratory (Ps-Hegesippus’ *De Excidio*), these near-contemporary authors all evince the same interest in positing Jewish digression from pristine origins into problematic futures past. All three authors signal a broader cultural temperament within fourth-century Christianity that prompted simultaneous delegitimization of the Jews and idealization of the ancient figures of the Jewish Scriptures (i.e., their ancestors). Authors like Ephrem and Epiphanius therefore help place Ps-Hegesippus within one facet of a late ancient moment of intellectual-cultural history. At the same time, we would do well to distinguish Ps-Hegesippus from these authors. Ps-Hegesippus is a Christian author penning a classical-looking war monograph. Ephrem and Epiphanius write as Christian leaders. Where they fixate upon doctrinal and theological issues, Ps-Hegesippus accentuates the military, diplomatic, and civic-leadership traits of his *exempla*.

⁷⁷ Kim 2015, 80.

Consider their treatments of Moses: Whereas Ephrem cites Moses within a story about worship and idolatry (the golden calf episode of Exod 32) and Epiphanius stresses Moses as *Gesetzgeber* and purveyor of spiritual *paideia* (the giving of the Law at Exod 19–24), Ps-Hegesippus recalls the martial miracles of Israel's run-in with Egypt and instances of divine provision in the face of looming national disaster in the wilderness (here and at *De Excidio* 5.16). While Ephrem, Epiphanius, and Ps-Hegesippus have all adopted a similar cultural ethos and contribute to a broader Christian discourse, their divergent aims and interests result in the production of markedly discrete scripts contributing to that larger discourse.

Ephrem, Epiphanius, and Ps-Hegesippus voice a typical Christian discourse that will strike the scholar of late antiquity as eminently familiar. But these narratives of Jewish national decline were no foregone conclusion. Aryeh Kofsky and Serge Ruzer have argued that Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428) furnishes a “mitigated supersessionism” that is “opposed to the traditional Christian paradigm of the gradual religious decline of the Jews.”⁷⁸ Similarly, Paula Fredriksen has located in Augustine, who knew well and utilized thoroughly a classically and biblically construed version of exemplarity, a non-monochromatic presentation of Judaism wherein “Jews can serve as positive moral exemplars as well as negative ones” and by which Augustine appears as an “unlikely revolutionary” who in fact produced “something all but unprecedented within his tradition: a Christian affirmation of Jews and Judaism.”⁷⁹ Options existed for Christians dealing for various reasons with Jewish history in the fourth century. In arguing for Jewish national decline, Ps-Hegesippus and like-minded authors such as Ephrem and Epiphanius were doing just that: making arguments. Not everyone agreed as to the modes and meanings of Jewish history. Ps-Hegesippus' use of biblical *exempla* to forge a story of Jewish national decline at *De Excidio* 5.2.1 (and elsewhere) constituted a point of contention. The story Ps-Hegesippus told was up for debate.

* * *

Ps-Hegesippus' choice of biblical *exempla* at *De Excidio* 5.2.1, and his use of them to communicate Jewish national decline, places him squarely and clearly within the well-known Christian discursive milieu of late antiquity. At the same time, Ps-Hegesippus' precise treatment of these

⁷⁸ Kofsky and Ruzer 2015, concerning Theodore's *Commentary on John*.

⁷⁹ Fredriksen 2008, 102, 137, 195–96, 210, 222–23, 241–42, 309.

figures in tone, context, and content renders him unique within Christian late antiquity. His use of *exempla* at *De Excidio* 5.2.1 in some ways mirrors Roman cultural mores more than Christian ones. This comports with the overall sketch conveyed throughout this book that Ps-Hegesippus is both classical and biblical at the same time, and that his Hebrew *exempla* illustrate this particularly well. The fact that this defining feature of *De Excidio* shines through in 5.2 should not surprise. This is arguably the most important and representative chapter of the work overall,⁸⁰ and it is also a unique, creative literary form: Ps-Hegesippus' addressing Jerusalem and the Jews in a second-person address represents "an editorial intrusion unexampled in ... earlier authors."⁸¹

In this chapter, my argument that Ps-Hegesippus appears "classical" in his discursive habits has in large part proceeded *via negativa*: Ps-Hegesippus does *not* talk in the same kinds of ways and about the same kinds of things that most late antique Christians authors tend to. This refrain will continue throughout the course of this book: While Ps-Hegesippus in many ways fits right into late antique Christian discourse, the reverberations of classical culture within *De Excidio* render it a distinctive text. This is not to say that Greco-Roman antiquity provides the only lens necessary for viewing *De Excidio*; far from it. This book's overall argument is that the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition coalesces in remarkable ways with discursive features of classical culture within *De Excidio*. Moreover, at the beginning of this chapter we noted that the theme of Jewish national decline in *De Excidio*, which resonates with classical historiography and late antique Christian literature, was not unknown in earlier Christian literature either. Indeed, the speech of Stephen in Acts 7 already anticipates a Christian fixation upon the decline of the Jews. This Stephen, the New Testament's paradigmatic martyr, moreover provides an expedient transition to Chapter 5. There it will be shown as starkly as anywhere else in this book that Ps-Hegesippus is firmly plugged into decidedly Judeo-Christian themes of late antiquity. In this case, the theme is martyrdom.

⁸⁰ Bay 2018.

⁸¹ Bell 1977, 134, dubbing 5.2.1 (with 5.22.1) one of two speeches in *De Excidio* with no Josephan parallel.

Jewish and Christian Martyrdom at *De Excidio* 3.2 and 5.22

In all of *De Excidio*, the Latin term *martyres* (“martyrs” or “witnesses”) appears exactly once.¹ Unlike so many Christian authors of late antiquity, Ps-Hegesippus did not expatiate upon martyrs or, indeed, upon any kind of Christian heroes. *De Excidio* is about Jews and Romans, and it is Jews and Romans that populate its narrative. Like the term *martyres*, Christians show up exactly once in *De Excidio*. Yet contrary to what one might expect, Christians and martyrs are not mentioned in the same place. They appear in totally different contexts. However, by putting these two *hapax legomena* of *De Excidio* together, we find that Ps-Hegesippus does have something to say, subtle yet poignant, about the idea of martyrdom.

At *De Excidio* 5.22, Ps-Hegesippus relates how the Jewish rebel leader Simon bar Giora killed a certain Matthias and his sons in Jerusalem. Ironically, Matthias was the one who had provided Simon access into Jerusalem. He summoned Simon after John of Gischala and the “Zealots” had begun to mistreat the populace. Josephus records this series of events very briefly (*Jewish War* 5.527–40). Ps-Hegesippus uses the scene to place a long speech into the mouth of Matthias. This is one of only two speeches in all of *De Excidio* created *ex nihilo*; that is, that has no parallel in Josephus’ *Jewish War* (the other is at 5.2, treated in [Chapter 4](#)).² In this speech, Matthias addresses his and his sons’ impending deaths and

¹ The Latin term goes back to the North African *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* (15) from the second half of the second century; [van Henten 2020](#), 75.

² [Bell 1977](#), 33, 134, 139, 153, who classes this speech as one of two “judicial” orations in *De Excidio*.

the related issues of (in)justice, afterlife, punishment, and martyrdom. He uses several biblical *exempla* to make his point. At one point he exhorts his children: “Console yourselves, dear sons: we suffer what the martyrs have suffered (*patimur nos quod passi sunt martyres*) – Simon has arranged it” (*De Excidio* 5.22.1). Yet, intriguingly, Matthias and sons do not come off looking like martyrs. Quite the contrary, Ps-Hegesippus scripts Matthias’ discourse such that their deaths are cast as just punishment for involvement with Jewish rebellion. In fact, one only finds “real” martyrs in *De Excidio* in one passage: the out-of-place Chapter 3.2, where the sole Christians to appear in the narrative, Peter and Paul, emerge in a unique version of their martyrdom stories called the *Passion of Peter and Paul* (*Passio Petri et Pauli*). These chapters, *De Excidio* 3.2 and 5.22, are not intrinsically related. Ps-Hegesippus proffers no clear-cut connection between them. However, I will suggest that in the overall context of *De Excidio*, they amount to a contest of martyrdoms, in part framed against the backdrop of ancient Hebrew *exempla*. In this competition, the Christians, not the Jews, reflect the self-sacrificing heroes of biblical antiquity.

KILLING MATTHIAS: *DE EXCIDIO* 5.22 AND THE INVENTION OF JEWISH NON-MARTYRDOM

Because *De Excidio* 5.22 records a speech otherwise unattested in ancient literature, and because no adequate, accessible modern translation of it exists, it makes sense to begin our discussion with the entirety of that chapter, reproduced in full. I only reproduce here the Latin of the salient portion, dealing with biblical *exempla*. This passage, with its long speech by Matthias, comes in the middle of Book 5, amid grave turbulence in Jerusalem. This miniature Jewish civil war had been exacerbated by John, and further by Simon. At the end of 5.21 we read that “Simon raged, nor did he withdraw after being sated by the deaths of so many; but rather, because his enemies had begun to disappear, he turned against his friends.”³ Thus we come to 5.22 (the section of the speech with biblical *exempla*, our focus, appears here in **bold**):

[1] At length, he [Simon] did in fact even kill Matthias, after having tortured him, by whose authority he had been received into the city. He was convicted of no crime before him but rather was accused of betrayal and suspected of conspiracy.

³ *De Excidio* 5.21.4 (CSEL 66.1: 346).

This was because he had had confidence to express himself in public sedulously and without any guile, as if to a friend. He held his opinion deeply concealed for a long time, nor now did he confide himself, i.e. to a friend, but was exposed by some other signal of his indignation. Thus when an accusation was made against him that he had intentionally come to an accord with and sided with the Romans, it was commanded that he be seized along with his sons.

He was summoned and was not given any opportunity to defend himself: before any consideration could be made he was sentenced to torture, and his offspring were not excepted from this but were included in his punishment. He asked not for a prolongment of life but for a quick death, so that, according to the natural order, he might be killed first and thus not await the murder of his sons, that he not be a survivor of the corpses of his sons, with he himself to become one immediately [thereafter].

But he did not obtain what piety itself would have demanded even if he had not asked. And he asked for this to be granted to him as a gift in return for the fact that he had opened the city to Simon. As one who was answerable to his country, to be sure, but who had been a promoter of Simon, he owed this penalty to the people; but Simon owed him his thanks. How very cruel he was who would neither spare his own friend nor relax the punishment of the one who arranged his entrance into the city.

The father was led to punishment along with his three sons, for the fourth had taken himself away by flight. He was set in sight of the Roman army as a form of insult, so that those to whom he had desired to defect might see his punishment. "Let your friends set you free, if they are able," he [Simon] said. Then his [Matthias'] sons were brought out.

He was not permitted to give his children a last kiss or to take his sons in a final embrace, yet not being deprived the liberty of his fatherly voice, he addressed his sons with a pitiable speech: "I, my sons, introduced the enemy to you, I ushered in the executioners, when I asked Simon to set foot in the city. He is the day of death to us, he the cause of this spectacle of familial slaughter. I deserve this, I confess, and I do not exonerate myself of guilt: in my eager desire to repress the one, I have summoned one who is worse.

Simon was sought for help and, having turned to the killing of his own country, he had brought diligent advisors up on charges. We who sought a defender are culpable before our country. Rightly do we suffer the punishment for imprudence, though not for perfidy. Simon himself absolves us by killing us, he who claims that it was not granted him by me but was sought by the will of the country that he should be an aid against the savagery of John as soon as he arrived and led in the Idumeans. We believed that in putting the two of them together the common people would be free. Who would believe that I did not bring this to you out of fondness but reckoning it to be the more tolerable of evils, lest you should kill?

But why should I speak as if I am making excuses for a crime? To be sure, in my estimation there is nothing I could have done worse than what I have done in placing you upon our necks. But in this I was a traitor to the homeland, not to you. I owe a death sentence to the people, but you owe me a favor. I owe the punishment of betrayal to the country because I brought you in: but when did I

begin to be a traitor to you? If I had thought of fleeing, I would have been keeping my own counsel, I would not have been violating my tie to my country.

For who does not flee both an enemy and an internal enemy? For we thought you were a fellow citizen, but what we found was an enemy. Having been sought out for help, what have you repaid, what did you promise beforehand concerning which you have hereafter reversed directions? You entered in so that you could drive an enemy out, not so that you could employ an enemy; so that you might prevent murder, not so that you yourself might join in it; so that you might do away with plunder, not so that you yourself might engage in plunder, so that you might grant assistance to an innocent populace.

Why have you turned your weapons against it? Previously we were beset by plunder; you have introduced war. Previously only a very few were snatched away to death; you have made a massacre of the entire population. Who is a traitor to his country, who does more to assist the Roman cause, if not the one who cuts off those fighting on behalf of their country, if not the one who snatches protection away from so many citizens, if not the one who has turned the point of his sword away from the enemy and toward his fellows?

The enemy offered peace from outside the walls, you introduced battle inside the walls; he desired to put an end to the siege, you sped up the assault. He held back fire from our city, you threw flames onto the very pediments of the Temple. He offered a cessation of hostilities in view of our sacraments, you throughout the same holy days have extinguished the altars of God by the final destruction of our city and by the blood of the priests. They besieged the walls, you the Temple.

I multiply my own crimes: I welcomed gangs into our native city, I armed your fury, I prepared this widespread destruction because of some folly of old age. I recognize the imprudence of [this] mindless stage of life. We must ameliorate our shame with confession, since we are not able to dismiss our sin by denying it. We two before all others have hastened the destruction of our country, I by error in judgment, you by instituting murder.

Therefore I pay to you, o country, the punishments that I owe, and I give many thanks to this Simon himself, since I will not survive to see your ashes. And would that I not survive my children, but on account of the severity of your wickedness, Simon, I stand as a spectator to the slaughter of my sons. I deserve it, I confess, I who was unable to see that John was deceptive and who elected for you to be armed. O, rash old age! We have feared a ghost and have sought out a tyrant.

I, your surety—I, your intercessor—I supported [your] legation. I sought you as a master, and I introduced an assassin. Therefore let us behold what we have done: the [wax] image of John frightened us, the plunders of Simon delighted us. Let the parade be quickened by funeral processions, let the executioner come, let him slaughter sons before the face of their father and father over the corpses of his sons. Let me, miserable old man that I am, drink in the blow of the executioner upon the necks of my children by the swing of his savage axe. In this spectacle no one is more calamitous than he who commands it. Cruel man! Criminal! I do what you order, but I do it against my will.

Yet I have a consolation in such calamity. I suffer all that is most miserable, since you have commanded it. Whatever is most monstrous I undergo happily

while you look on.⁴ You have filled up the measure of the most brutal crimes. At least let it be allowed for me to address my sons, to say farewell to my children at the end. Let there be a place for final kisses, which are something that we have in common even with the wild animals. Let not the mournful embrace of nature be prohibited, which chance can give even to the deceased. Insofar as you all precede me to punishment, this will accomplish piety in me.

I will fall upon the dead and still unburied bodies of my children, covering them with the sod of my body, as it were, lest vultures rip them apart or wild beasts devour them. I will lick up the blood of my children and will soak it up myself, lest the wild beasts lick it up. And perhaps this piety will augment the compassion of nature itself, so that by the briefest embrace, while dying, I may draw my children close together, so that you may not be able to separate us when you want to. To be sure, even if you have separated our bodies, you will not separate our souls.

But enough, we have taken up enough of our parting with tears. Lead the way, sons, and prepare the way for your father who comes after you. If I have been able to follow, I will join you at once, and if this old age proves an impediment, for which reason I am less able to follow thriving youths, proceed to your abode so that you may receive your weak father into everlasting hospitality. I certainly wanted to go first myself and even asked for this, but I did not receive it.

Nevertheless, because you are innocent, for this reason better lodging-places will be selected for you than if I myself, who summoned Simon, should precede you. That embassy weighs me down, even though it was commanded by the citizens, accepted by a striving populace. Go on ahead, therefore, sons, treading that celestial path with a purer footprint.

So also the Maccabees went before their mother, but they [went] to reward, we to punishment. Nevertheless, that pious mother beheld her sons dying and also wallowing in their own blood, she saw them as brothers embracing each other in turn with natural affection, and she delighted in her triumph, which she obtained from the tyrant. Certainly the merits of those suffering were different, but the savageries of both of those who commanded them were the same. Antiochus contrived this with Persian barbarity, for to them belong the inventions of novel punishments, [a practice which] you have followed. Yet while he preserved the mother until last for the persuasion of the royal will, you have ordered that the father be preserved for the torment of paternal pain.

Console yourselves, dear sons: we suffer what the martyrs have suffered—Simon has arranged it. That which the barbarian persecutor devised, the tyrant has decreed. Therefore we march forward voluntarily, and we flee the assembly of brigands. When we will have departed safely into that everlasting home, if someone comes to us who may ask, ‘how do things fare with that one-time people of God?’, what will we say to them, especially if, as is natural, Jonathan of untouched youth shall have come to you who are younger, and Saul, as is natural, to me, the sinner?

What, I ask, shall we say, except that that people, the new elect Judah, whom the sea fled, for whom the son stood still, for whom the Jordan stopped, that

⁴ The adverb “happily” (*libenter*) could apply to Matthias as sufferer or Simon as spectator.

people, I say, to whom the tide was navigable, the air wholesome, the land heavenly, [land] which was not, like this our land, imbued with the appearance of corruption but assumed the beauty of resurrection, now serves the Idumeans and is subject to Simon, the prince of thieves, and claims neither that slavery with security nor danger with freedom.

What do we think they will say in response, they who elected to perish in war rather than outlive the liberty of their native country? Still further, how will Mattathias, progenitor of the Maccabees, respond, who preferred, in observance of the law, to die while resting on the sabbath than to live while fighting [on it], if he should hear how Simon not only stirred up the incalculable slaughter of citizens on the sabbath but also caused the very priests of the Lord to have their throats cut on all the divine and solemn days of sacred festival?

How much would Jeconiah groan were he to hear that Simon, who first overturned the city by seditions, violated that most ancient religion of the temple by the slaughter of citizens, who had assembled together so often, and that when he surrendered the city it had been stripped bare by fire, with all desiring to perish, for the city to be destroyed, for the temple to be burned, for the entire populace to be killed, lest even a trace be left for the occupying conqueror. How greatly, I say, will Jeconiah lament—granted that in a time of pressing evils he was not successful in his reign, yet he did better than his son. For the father preferred that he himself, rather than the country, be less happy, even if he was nevertheless all the more wretched for his piety. In that vein, having gone forth from the city he gave himself and his progeny over in slavery to the besieging Babylonians, lest he see the motherland overturned and the people of God taken captive.

The son, since he feared for himself while facing the same kind of danger yet without the same kind of compassion, led both himself into exile and the city to destruction. Thus this latter man was a cause of bad fortune for the country, nor was he good luck to himself, who lost both his children and his eyes, whereas the former man was more prudent, who redeemed the captivity of the city with his own captivity. And thereafter his departure was instructive. For that one passed away older and within a kingdom, this one younger and in servitude, even though afterwards the Babylonian king established a royal throne for him hard by himself and conferred [on him] the first word in council, a solace amidst horrible calamity.⁵

⁵ The Latin for the **bolded** section only reads: *Et Macchabaei matrem praeuenerunt, sed illi ad praemium, nos ad supplicium. Spectauit tamen pia mater morientes filios et supra suorum se uoluitantes sanguinem, uidit complectentes se inuicem fratres naturae necessitudine, et suo laetabatur triumpho, quem de tyranno consequebatur. Diuersa quidem patientum merita, sed eadem saeuitia utriusque praecipientis. Inuenit hoc Persica Antiochus immanitate, apud ipsos enim nouorum sunt commenta suppliciorum, tu secutus es. Ille tamen seruauit ultimam matrem ad persuasionem regiae uoluntatis, tu seruari iussisti patrem ad cruciatum paterni doloris.*

Consolamini uos, filii carissimi: patimur nos quod passi sunt martyres, Simon statuit. Quod persecutor barbarus inuenit, tyrannus praecepit. Proficiscamur igitur uolentes, et fugiamus conuentus latronum. Sane cum in illam domum perpetuam decesserimus, si qui ad nos uenerint qui requirant, quid agat ille quondam populus dei, quid illis

And finally now, my own lot—to die rather than live after the murder of my children—is more tolerable, since from it you may discern how cruel he is who would slaughter sons in the presence of their father. Yet his kingly gifts are worse than the wounds of piety. For either he should not have introduced such impieties in the first place, or he should not have replaced them with such honors thereafter. As if any dignity could be retained after the loss of [one's] sons, or the slaughter of [one's] progeny be compensated for by the bestowal of any honor. Truly nothing, no dignity could wash away so much pain.

No honor can heal this wound except death alone, which can do away with the ability to feel, can remove remembrance. Hurry up then, killer! But wait, while I look at my sons, while, before they die, I behold them, lest one of them perhaps, moved by immaturity of age, should fear death, while he might still escape a most savage tyrant. It is a kindness [for us] to die, my sons, lest we witness the captivity of the country. Wounds of the body are more tolerable than those of the mind. Now it is endurable for me to see your murders, which I was trying to avoid, lest I see the murders of all in common, lest we witness the burning of the country and the entire city [having] become their grave. For the one who will have died will be more blessed than the one who is spared. Highest God, let not Simon be dispersed with his children among the flocks of criminals.

The prisoner should see what he has wrought; for, not least, Matthias said, “should he be able to bear what he was able to think up. Yet I do not request

respondebimus, maxime si uobis utpote iunioribus integer aevi Ionathas, mihi Saul utpote peccatori occurrerit?

Quid, inquam, dicemus, nisi populum illum, Iuda nouellum dilectum, quem mare fugit, cui sol stetit, cessit Iordanes, populum illum, inquam, cui peruius fluctus fuit, aer fertilis, terra caelestis, quae non, ut nostra haec terra, speciem corruptionis induerit, sed resurrectionis gratiam adsumserit, seruire nunc Idumaeis et subiectum esse Simoni latronum principi, nec seruitutem ipsam habere securam nec periculum cum libertate?

Quid ad haec responsuros putamus, qui elegerunt bello perire quam libertati patriae superuiuere? Quid etiam Mattathiam responsurum Macchabaeorum auctorem, qui maluit obseruando legem sabbato feriatius mori quam proeliatius uiuere, si audierit quomodo Simon non solum sabbato caedes ciuium innumeras agitauerit, sed et ipsos sacerdotes domini numeniis et omnibus sanctis festae celebritatis diebus iugulari coegerit?

Quantum ingemescet Iechonias, cum audierit Simonem, qui seditionibus primo urbem euerterit, caede ciuium uiolauerit templi uetustam religionem, conuentum totiens ut sui deditione urbem exueret incendio, malle perire omnia, excidi urbem, templum exuri, plebem totam interfici, ne occupatae inclinet dominationis fastigium! Quantum, inquam, dolebit Iechonias, licet tempore malorum urgentium minus felix imperio, melior tamen filio. Pater enim sibi minus felix esse quam patriae, licet miserabiliter pie tamen, maluit. Itaque se cum sua prosapia egressus urbe Babyloniiis obsidentibus in seruitum dedit, ne euersam patriam et populum dei captiuum uideret.

Filius autem aerumna pari sed affectu inpari, dum sibi metuit, et se in exilium et urbem in excidium deduxit. Hic itaque infelix patriae nec sibi felix qui et liberos suos et oculos amisit, ille autem prudentior qui captiuitatem ciuium sua redemerit captiuitate. Denique exitus docuit. Iste in regno senior, ille iunior in seruitio defecit, quamuis ei postea thronum regium Babylonius rex iuxta se constituerit et consilii detulerit praerogatiuam, miserae solacia calamitatis.

these things. Let him consider how grave a crime it is which he who endures it is unable to requite, even by oath, but if it is bitter vengeance, how savagely unthinkable a wickedness has been committed. Let him be what he prefers, a captive survivor of his country, because the mockeries of life are worse than the punishments of death. But now, let there be an end to words.

Hurry up, executioner, while you still bear the sword stained by the blood of my sons, strike the father so that [his] wound may cool. This alone is a remedy for the one who is about to die, only by this does one avoid feeling the sting of the blade, the pain of the wound. Strike in sight of the Roman army, just as it has been commanded, so that they who will vindicate me may see. Let the enemy feel pity, because the comrade has not shown pity, let the Romans pass judgment, because Simon killed without passing judgment.

These are witnesses that I have been not a traitor but a defender of my country, [these] who saw me fighting and not deserting. If I had been able I would have avoided the enemy, I would not have summoned the enemy to my children: but oh that I had not sent for Simon!"

[2] Nor was any limit applied to such cruelty: the sons were lying, still unburied, with their father, and thus sacrilege was added to the parricidal spectacle. Ananias was killed, a priest born of an illustrious line, although no one should be more famous because of the dignity of their lineage than because of their discharging of religious duties. For honor is bestowed on account of the former, it is not sought on account of the latter. Let the ancient family keep for itself its signs of various honors, [for] the priesthoods also have their insignia, which are held aloft not with arms but with morals, and which are elevated not by the height of their branches but by the steadfastness of their works, by the extent of their faith, by the reach of their piety. Even the scribe Aristean was struck, and he of illustrious stock and with others also, fifteen other preeminent men from among the people, although let not nobility, but rather innocence render the murder unjust.

[3] Eleven further men were seized who, having been moved by the atrocity of his [Simon's] crime, had been equally conspiring and who each feared for himself what they had seen perpetrated against others. For since he [Simon] could be faithless to his friends and all hopes had been abandoned, with famine having ravaged everyone and now with the Romans already breaking in, with Simon unsettled by the task of helping with defense, reveling in the manufacture of cruelty, with the ease of betrayal acting as an enticement, it was that one of them, Judas, had assumed the position of lookout upon the tower. Therefore he, when he called the Romans, promising to hand over the tower to them, found that some disdained that he should issue a betrayal so late, while others disbelieved it because they had often prepared a trap while promising surrender. But Simon prevented it and exacted punishment on every one of his conspiring companions. And their bodies were thrown headlong from the wall.

De Excidio 5.22.1-3⁶

⁶ CSEL 66.1: 346-54.

This speech is heart-wrenching, and interesting. In it we see something of how Ps-Hegesippus understood death on behalf of the Jewish cause within the Roman–Jewish War. And, while we are most interested in the ancestral *exempla* who appear partway through the address, it will become clear as we progress why a block quotation of the entire chapter is helpful here.

The first *exempla* to appear in Matthias' speech are the Maccabean mother-martyr and her seven sons who died heroically under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, preferring this tortured end to disowning their people, nation, and customs. This story is known from 2 Maccabees 7 and 4 Maccabees. It was often cited by ancient Christians (see later in the chapter), and Ps-Hegesippus mentions it more than once. In fact, Ps-Hegesippus betrays a general Maccabean proclivity: He claims to have penned a work on the *res gestae* of the Maccabees himself (*De Excidio* Prol 3), uses the book of 1 Maccabees (in preference to Josephus' *War*) in his short yet stylized run-through of Hasmonean history (e.g., 1.1.1–3), and mentions the Maccabees – the freedom fighters and the martyrs – as the high point in Judean history at 2.1.2 (cf. 5.51.3). Most significantly, Ps-Hegesippus notes the Maccabees as role models in both of his fully original speeches, *De Excidio* 5.2 and 5.22. In the former, Ps-Hegesippus asks Jerusalem/the Jews:

Where is that faith of the Maccabees (*Macchabaeorum fides*), which once upon a time overthrew the Babylonians in short order, which put the Persians to flight, which turned the tables on Demetrius, which at the last overcame the arms, swords, and fires of Antiochus through women and children and, out of respect for the nation's customs, preferred to die rather than comply with the commands of the king? Where is the self-sacrifice of your ancestors, the most noble of all passions, because of which they offered themselves to death not so much for the sake of their children or their wives but rather for the sake of the Temple of God?

De Excidio 5.2.1⁷

The questions are rhetorical. The Jews of Ps-Hegesippus' narrative do not possess the *fides*, *deuotio*, and *passio* of the *patres*: The Jews' ancestors, including the Maccabees, had “the right stuff”; the first-century Jews do not. This is the framework within which *De Excidio* 5.22 appears: For Ps-Hegesippus, the Maccabees are quintessential heroes, the ultimate *exempla*.

Given the anti-Jewish, pro-Maccabean leanings of Ps-Hegesippus, and his proclivity for comparing latter-day Jews to the Maccabees (as seen in

⁷ CSEL 66.1: 298.

De Excidio 5.2), we might expect the Maccabees to appear in 5.22 in some sort of juxtaposition to the 70 CE Jews of the narrative present, as they do in 5.2. This is, in fact, just what we find. Matthias makes the obvious parallel between himself and “that pious mother” (*pia mater*) of 2 Macc 7 and 4 Macc. Just like her, Matthias is destined to die at the hands of a tyrant, yet only after watching his sons slain before his eyes. But at the very moment at which Matthias introduces these heroes into the narrative, he posits a qualitative distinction: “but they [went] to reward, we to punishment” (*sed illi ad praemium, nos ad supplicium*). From the outset, then, just as with the Hebrew heroes at *De Excidio* 5.2 discussed in [Chapter 4](#), the *exempla* introduced into Matthias’ speech at *De Excidio* 5.22 are not models pointing the narrative’s characters toward right behavior: They are models that expose how far short these characters have fallen of their ancestral ideal. They are contrastive *exempla*.

This becomes ever clearer when Matthias says that, while he and the Maccabean mother will have suffered the same kinds of savageries, their merits (*merita*) were “certainly different” (*diuersa quidem*). For that reason he exhorts his progeny: “Console yourselves, dear sons: we suffer what the martyrs have suffered—Simon has arranged it” (*Consolamini uos, filii carissimi: patimur nos quod passi sunt martyres, Simon statuit*). The distinction implied here is a fine one: Matthias and sons are suffering *what* the martyrs had suffered, but they are not suffering *like* the martyrs did. The process of torture and killing was the same – the only difference was that Antiochus tortured the Maccabean mother to break her will, whereas Simon tortures Matthias just to cause him pain – but the grounds for the killing were quite different. The Maccabean mother earned her death nobly, for which reason Matthias calls it a “triumph” in which she “rejoiced” (*suo laetabatur triumpho*). His own death, and those of his sons, on the other hand, are simply the result of poor decision-making. In *De Excidio* 5.22 Matthias and his boys are not martyrs; rather, as objects of torture and murder, they just look like it.

Matthias’ self-proclaimed guilt is among the most pronounced, and shocking, features of *De Excidio* 5.22. From the beginning of the speech Matthias chastises himself for allowing Simon into Jerusalem, willingly bearing all the blame for the harm Simon brought, including his and his sons’ deaths. In a way the speech reads like one long admission of guilt:

- “... I deserve this, I confess, and I do not exonerate myself of guilt (*Merui, fateor, nec culpam excuso*) ...
- We who sought a defender are culpable before our country (*rei sumus patriae*) ...

- Rightly do we suffer the punishment for imprudence (*recte quidem soluimus poenam imprudentiae*) ...
- there is nothing I could have done worse (*nihil grauius facere potui*) than what I have done in placing you upon our necks ...
- in this I was a traitor to my homeland (*in eo patriae reus fuerim*)...⁸
- I owe a death sentence to the people (*debuerim ego ciuibus mortem*) ...
- I owe the punishment of betrayal to the country (*debuerim patriae poenam prodicionis*) ...
- I multiply my own crimes (*coaceruo crimina mea*): I welcomed gangs into our native city, I armed your fury, I prepared this widespread destruction because of some folly of old age. I recognize the imprudence of [this] mindless stage of life ...
- We must ameliorate our shame with confession, since we are not able to dismiss our sin by denying it (*Confessione leuemus pudorem, quoniam negando peccatum exuere non possumus*) ...
- Therefore I pay to you, o country, the punishments that I owe (*Pendo igitur tibi, patria, debitas poenas*) ...
- I deserve it, I confess (*Merui, fateor*), I who was unable to see that John was deceptive and who elected for you to be armed. O, rash old age!”

This is not the speech of a martyr, but of a criminal pleading guilty. Matthias frames his actions, which led to his death, as the most unpatriotic deeds imaginable. The only thing slightly redeeming for Matthias is his senility; his old age helps explain, but does not exonerate, his poor choices. In placing such admissions in Matthias’ mouth, Ps-Hegesippus adds insult to injury. These statements frame Matthias’ death as if he were getting his just deserts. In ancient martyrdom accounts, the martyr’s defense and self-justification before his or her impending demise were among the most important features of the story. This was what made martyrs martyrs (literally “witnesses” who gave testimony just before their deaths). But Matthias’ speech in *De Excidio* 5.22 is no bold, righteous, fearless oath – it is a confession. In effect, he states: “I deserve to die.”

Mercifully, Matthias is allowed to exonerate his sons. Because they are innocent (*innocui*), he tells them that they can expect “better lodging

⁸ Cf. Jason in 2 Macc 5:8, there dubbed *patriae et ciuium hostis*. Thanks to Jan Willem van Henten for pointing me to this cross-reference.

places” (*meliora hospitia*; then *mansio*) on the other side. This reference to life after death and the eternal abode leads Matthias to mention the speech’s *exempla*, beginning with the Maccabean mother.⁹ Thereafter he imagines encountering the ancestors in “that everlasting home” (*domus perpetua*; elsewhere *diuturnum hospitium*) and immediately being met with questions – something akin to what one finds in the accounts of underworld journeys in Homer’s *Odyssey* (11.23–50) and Vergil’s *Aeneid* (6.109ff). The question that Matthias reckons will be asked of him by the dead bespeaks the Christian perspective of the author Ps-Hegesippus: “How goes it with that one-time people of God (*quid agat ille quondam populus dei*)?” For Ps-Hegesippus, the Jews were only formerly (*quondam*) the *populus dei*. They no longer are. In any case, Matthias dreads having to come up with an answer to that question. “What will we say to them (*quid illis respondebimus*)?”

Here we encounter the creativity of Ps-Hegesippus’ imagination in scripting this speech. He has Matthias suppose that such a question will be directed to him by the elder Saul, but to his sons by the younger Jonathan. It would only be natural (*utpote*), Matthias reasons, for Jonathan, “untouched by age” (*integer aevi*), to address those who are younger (*iunioribus*), while Saul approached him, the “sinner” (*peccatori*). (The implication is probably that Saul also was a *peccator*.)¹⁰ Either way, Matthias considers the question an *aporia* (*quid, inquam, dicemus?*). He cannot imagine what he would answer except that the “new elect Judah” (*Iuda nouellum dilectum*) now serves Simon and the Idumeans. The way he describes this people is reminiscent again of *De Excidio* 5.2: They are those to whom sea, sun, and Jordan River deferred (Exod 14; Josh 10; Josh 3). Given that such a historicized description appears in both of *De Excidio*’s original speeches (5.2 and 5.22), we may assume that this marks a particular way in which Ps-Hegesippus thought about the ancient Hebrews. Both past experience and the land of Judea itself (i.e., the Promised Land) are used to configure a pristine Hebrew past in which all the elements – water (*mare*), fire (*sol*), air (*aer*), and earth (*terra*) – serve and profit the people of God. And it is this august antiquity that gives Matthias pause. How could he tell Saul, Israel’s first king, that this once-mighty people were now slaves to a tyrant and an alien race?

⁹ Matthias clearly conveys consciousness of “a profound and substantial difference” between himself and his lot and those of the Maccabean martyrs of 2 Macc 7 and 4 Macc, as noted by Somenzi 2009, 172.

¹⁰ Cf., e.g., 1 Sam 26:21 (Vulgate).

The dilemma is compounded by the fact that Saul and Jonathan had – famously – died soldier’s deaths; that is, self-sacrificial deaths on behalf of their country.¹¹ How could Matthias look Saul in the eye and reply?

Matthias imagines the Jews’ predicament on a spectrum between slavery (*seruitus*) and freedom (*libertas*). He laments their current status inasmuch as they lack the safety (*secura*) that comes with servitude, but also the boldness that could lead them to liberty. The Jews occupy a middle ground, neither safe nor free. Contrarily, the Jews’ exemplary ancestors, to whom Matthias imagines speaking, “chose to perish in war rather than outlive the liberty of their native country” (*elegerunt bello perire quam libertati patriae superuivere*). Once again we may reinforce the point that Ps-Hegesippus’ use of biblical *exempla* often diminishes the later Jews by comparison. Here it is Mattathias, the *auctor Macchabaeorum*, who makes his descendants look bad. For he, Matthias avers, chose to observe the Sabbath, even if that meant dying as opposed to breaking God’s law.¹² On the contrary, Simon not only slaughters common people on the Sabbath but even priests of the Lord, and even on holy days. This juxtaposition is just like the contrasts drawn in *De Excidio* 5.2. Yet here the *exempla* selected are different. In addition to the Maccabean mother, Jonathan, Saul, and Mattathias, Matthias recalls Jeconiah. Jeconiah, also called Jehoiachin in the Hebrew Bible, is famous for having been (willingly) deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 24:12, 15; 2 Chr 36:10).¹³ There he died, a captive if not a slave (2 Kgs 25:27–29; Jer 52:31–33). This Matthias casts as a deed of self-sacrifice, done with an eye to sparing Jerusalem.¹⁴ Very different was Zedekiah, whom Matthias calls Jeconiah’s son but who may actually have been his brother (2 Chr 36:10) or uncle (2 Kgs 24:17). But whatever his relation, Zedekiah was known for having rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 24:20b; 2 Chr

¹¹ 1 Sam 31; 1 Chr 10; cf. 2 Sam 1:17–27.

¹² This contradicts Ps-Hegesippus’ statement in *De Excidio* 1.1.2, where he says that Mattathias “was the pioneer (*auctor*) of making military assaults on the Sabbath, lest in similar fashion they themselves also be trapped in the same way as many of them already had, refusing to undertake battle during the Sabbath so as to lie unavenged against the enemies rushing upon them.”

¹³ Cf. 2 Chr 3:17; Esth 2:6; Jer 24:1; 27:20–21; 29:2. Ps-Hegesippus casts Jeconiah in the same light in a speech of Titus at *De Excidio* 5.31.2. One or both of these passages in which Jeconiah appears in *De Excidio* are likely inspired by Josephus *War* 6.104–6, where Josephus, within a speech to the rebel John of Gischala, twice calls Jeconiah a “noble example” (καλὸν ὑπόδειγμα) of a leader’s putting his country’s and people’s welfare before himself.

¹⁴ Perhaps drawing upon Jer 24:4–7; 27:21–22; 28:4.

36:13),¹⁵ a move that earned him a one-way ticket to Babylon, after being bound and blinded (2 Kgs 25:7; Jer 52:11), and invited the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple (2 Kgs 25:8–9; 2 Chr 36:17–19).

The Zedekiah *exemplum* was likely to hit very close to home for Matthias. A quick look at a few more of that story's details explains why. The clear moral of the biblical narrative is that Zedekiah resisted Babylon when he should have submitted to its yoke, following the instruction of the Lord sent through the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 38:17–18). In resisting, he caused the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple, and effectively the Jews as well. This is precisely what Matthias in *De Excidio* 5.22 sees himself as having done. More poignantly, the Bible records that Zedekiah's sons were slaughtered before his eyes (2 Kgs 25:7; Jer 52:11) before he was blinded and deported to Babylon. The death of his sons was the last thing he ever saw. Matthias anticipates the exact same thing. While Matthias at first seemed to have some affinity with the Maccabean mother-martyr, it turns out that Zedekiah is actually a much more appropriate analogy. Like Zedekiah, after helping provoke foreigners to destroy Jerusalem and its Temple, Matthias awaits seeing his sons slain before dying his own ignoble death.

The way that Ps-Hegesippus portrays Matthias as identifying with several of these *exempla* is revealing of how ancient peoples seem to have made sense of their own individual lots in life; that is, by identifying with earlier examples, what we might call “types.” Ps-Hegesippus imagines Matthias on the brink of death (remember that he gives no speech in Josephus' *War*), conceptualizing his predicament by means of others who had suffered similar fates in like circumstances. This reflective process directly mirrors how *exempla* functioned in the Roman world, as Rebecca Langlands has explained: The fact that exemplary heroes had carried “out their deeds in specific and identifiable historical contexts” enriched the process of learning from them, so that “the learner compares himself or herself to the exemplary figure and tailors moral messages and ideals to his or her own behavior.”¹⁶ Except, in Matthias' case, it is too late. For him, the ship of learning from past *exempla* has sailed, or is about to. As pointed out in the last chapter, *exempla* can serve not only to inform future behavior, but also to assess past behavior. Matthias straddles that temporal divide between past and present, already having

¹⁵ Interpreted in 2 Chr 36 as rebellion against the Lord. Cf. Jer 21; 24; 27; 32:1–5; 34; 37; 39:1–7; 44:30; 52:1–11.

¹⁶ Langlands 2018, 30.

undertaken his fateful actions yet still – temporarily – able to reflect upon and learn from them. In considering what ancestors he resembles in his present pickle, Matthias is not learning how to behave in the future – he is reflecting upon his poor decisions of the past.

QUO VENIS? CHRISTIANS IN THE
BACKGROUND AT *DE EXCIDIO* 3.2

The *exempla* brought forward in *De Excidio* 5.22 suffice to show that Matthias and his sons are *not* martyrs in Ps-Hegesippus' perspective. The only way in which they resemble certain martyrs is the tragic circumstances in which they die. It is therefore interesting that this passage is the only one in all of *De Excidio* in which *martyres* are mentioned. The only time Ps-Hegesippus ever uses the word “martyr” is in a passage depicting what martyrs are *not*. Equally interesting is the fact that Ps-Hegesippus does briefly relate an account of two Christian martyrs in his narrative. I will suggest that this is a little more than coincidence.

De Excidio 3.2 is the only passage in the entire work where Christian characters appear. In it, the deaths of the apostles Peter and Paul are briefly recounted. In one sense, the passage seems out of place. What is a martyr tale doing in a work of classical-Christian historiography? In fact, the generic boundaries often associated with martyr tales on one hand and classical historiography on the other were not polar opposites. Eric Rebillard has recently argued that early Christian martyr narratives existed somewhere between fact and fiction: They were neither precise historical accounts nor completely made up.¹⁷ This sounds a lot like ancient historiography as we described it in the [Introduction](#) and [Chapter 1](#): The norms of Greco-Roman history-writing revolved around a level of believability (realism) combined with entertainment value and didactic utility. So did Christian martyr stories. What makes *De Excidio* 3.2 so odd is the fact that it involves Christians at all. *De Excidio*, as we know, is a history about Jews.¹⁸

Book 3 of *De Excidio* begins with a sequential narrative of devolving Roman political affairs and simultaneous problems in the province of

¹⁷ Rebillard 2021, though I wonder about the distinction between “authenticity” and veracity.

¹⁸ Eusebius also interjects the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul into a section of his *Church History* that is effectively a Jewish history (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.25.5–6; cf. 3.3.1, which transmits “affairs among the Jews” within Christian history).

Judea. Ps-Hegesippus regales the reader with illustrations of the Emperor Nero's vices, vicissitudes, and viciousness. At the end of *De Excidio* 3.1 we read that God instigated the so-called Year of the Four Emperors – that is, 68/69 CE, beginning with the demise of Nero and resulting in the rise of Vespasian – as a means of hastening the destruction of the Jews.¹⁹ This also resulted in Nero's downfall, inasmuch as it spurred him to persecute the Christians, the proximate cause of his doom. Here we come to *De Excidio* 3.2, the so-called *Passion of Peter and Paul*, which I quote in its entirety:

There were in Rome at that time Peter and Paul, [the] teachers of the Christians, exalted in their works, well known for their leadership, who had by the virtue of their deeds made Nero an enemy. Nero had been captivated by the charms of Simon the Magician, who had won over his soul. To him Simon had promised aid in victory, the subjugation of peoples, longevity of life, and preservation of health by his deadly arts. And Nero, who did not know [how] to examine the power of [such] things, put his trust in him. Therefore, Simon held the highest place of friendship with Nero, seeing that he even thought him to be the preserver of his health and the guardian of his life.

But when Peter exposed Simon's falsehoods and shameful deeds, and showed that the appearance of those deeds was deceptive and that he was unable to do anything real or true, he was held in derision and became consumed by sadness, and rightly so. And even though he had experienced Peter's power in other parts of the world, nevertheless, coming to Rome he dared to pronounce that he could resuscitate the dead.

There was at that time in Rome a youth of noble birth who had died, a relative of Caesar, whose death was universally mourned. Many suggested looking into whether it was possible for him to be revived. Peter was held to be the most famous for such works, but among the gentiles no stock was held in these kinds of acts. But sorrow demanded a remedy, and a procession came to Peter. But there were still those who argued for summoning Simon.

Both came forward. Peter said to Simon, who was boasting about his power, that he would give him first try to resuscitate the dead man, if he were able. But if he should not revive him, he was not going to be absent, so that Christ might bring strength to the deceased, by which he would be able to rise again. Simon,

¹⁹ *De Excidio* 3.1.3 (CSEL 66.1: 183) "Galba certainly never would have seized upon the inclination of aspiring to the *imperium* had he not found Vespasian to be absent. But God arranged this so that the man would be directed off into Syria, he who was to overthrow the insolence of the Jews by the final destruction of their race and the disgrace of captivity, and he withdrew his aid from Nero, allowing for the fact that the strength of no man is able to bring an impediment against heavenly arrangements. Nevertheless, being out of his mind after learning that the Roman army had been struck down by a strong force in its war with the Jews, he rose up against the Christians, so that his fated end might approach him."

who thought that his arts would prove particularly potent in a city of the gentiles, proposed the condition that, if he should revive the dead, Peter should be slain—Peter, who had invited harm on himself by provoking the “Great Power,” for so Simon was called. But if Peter should genuinely prove more powerful, then he could avenge himself in a similar way against Simon. Peter acquiesced, and Simon began.

He approached the bed of the deceased and began to recite incantations and mutter ominous sounds. The man who had died seemed to move his head. A great clamor arose among the gentiles to the effect that he was now alive, that he was speaking with Simon. Wrath and indignation rose against Peter, that he had dared to pit himself against such [a] power. Then the holy apostle demanded silence and said, “If the deceased is alive, let him speak; if he has been revived, let him arise, let him walk, let him say something.” [He said that] it had been an apparition, not true, that the head *seemed* to have moved.

Thereafter Peter said, “Let Simon be moved away from the bed,” so that then there would not be any pretense. Simon was led away from the bed, and he who had died remained without the appearance of any motion whatsoever. Peter stood beside the bed for a long time and, after orienting himself internally with a brief prayer, said in a loud voice, “Young man, arise! The Lord Jesus heals you.” And immediately the youth arose and spoke and walked around and took food, and Peter restored him to his mother.

Peter, when it was requested that he not leave the boy, said, “Let him not forsake the One who made him arise, whose servants we are. Rest secure, O mother, fear not for your son, for he has his Protector.” And when the people rose up against Simon so that he was going to be stoned, Peter said, “It is sufficient punishment for him to know that his arts have no power. But let him live and, though he be unwilling, he may watch the kingdom of Christ grow.”

The magician was tormented by the glory of the apostle. He collected himself and summoned the full power of his incantations, he gathered the people, and said that he had been offended by the Galileans and was going to take leave of the city which he had been in the habit of guarding. He named a day and promised flight, by which he would be carried through the celestial abodes, he to whom, whenever he should desire it, heaven would open.

On the stated day he ascended the Capitoline Hill, and hurling himself from the cliff face, began to fly. The people were baffled and many venerated him, saying that this was the power of a god, not a man, who could fly in bodily form, and that Christ had never done as much. At that point Peter, standing up in their midst, said, “Lord Jesus, show him that his arts are devoid of power, lest this people, who will put faith in this spectacle, be deceived. Let him drop, Lord, yet so that while [still] living, he may know that he was able to do nothing.” And immediately, at the voice of Peter, the mechanism of wings which he had acquired became entangled and he dropped, yet he was not killed, but with a broken and crippled leg he retired to Aricia, and there he died.

Nero, when he learned of this, was very put out at having been deceived and at having been deprived by the fate of such a friend, and that a man useful and indispensable both to himself and to the common good had been removed. Indignant,

he began to seek grounds on which he might put Peter to death. And now the time had come for the holy apostles Peter and Paul to be called home [alternate reading: “called saints”].²⁰

And thereafter, when orders had been given that they should be arrested, Peter was asked to remove himself elsewhere. He objected, saying that he would by no means do this, so as to depart as if he were terrified by the fear of death, and that it was a good thing to suffer for Christ, who had handed himself over to be killed for the sake of all, and that not death but rather immortality was approaching. What an indignity if he should flee the suffering of his body! He who had compelled many by his teaching to offer themselves as sacrifices to Christ was obligated also to follow the call of his Lord, so that he himself might bring honor and glory to Christ by his suffering. These and other things Peter put forward as excuses, but the people besought him with tears not to give himself up and to depart from the unrest among the uproars of the gentiles.

Overcome by their tears, Peter gave in, and promised that he would leave the city. Soon, after the brothers had bid him farewell by night,²¹ and after a brief prayer had been made, he began to go forth alone. When he had come to the gate he saw Christ approaching him. Worshipping him, he said, “Lord, why are you coming?” [alternate reading: “where are you going?”]. And Christ said to him, “I come to be crucified again.” Peter understood that he had spoken of his suffering, because it appeared that Christ, who suffered for every person, was about to suffer in him, certainly not in the pain of the body but by a certain co-suffering of mercy or at least by the fame of his glory.

And he turned back and came into the city, and when he had been captured by his persecutors and sentenced to the cross, he demanded that he be fastened to the cross with his feet inverted, because he was unworthy to be affixed to the cross in the same manner that the Son of God had suffered. This having been granted, either because it was fated to happen as Christ had predicted, or because the persecutor was not unwilling to indulge an increase of torments, both he himself and Paul—one by the cross, the other by the sword—were killed.

De Excidio 3.2.1²²

This passage is intriguing, important, and understudied. It contains one of the earliest iterations of the *Quo Vadis?* story (articulated *Quo Venis?* in every early manuscript of *De Excidio* save one: Bern BurgerBibliothek 180), in which Peter, while leaving Rome, meets a resurrected Christ walking to meet him. The meeting results in Peter’s return to Rome and upside-down crucifixion, portrayed as a kind of vicarious second crucifixion of Jesus. This chapter has much in common with several other fourth- to sixth-century Latin accounts of this apocryphal tale associated

²⁰ Alternately, one could read here: “Now the time had come, because of which they are called saints.”

²¹ Or: “The next night, after the brothers had bid him farewell.”

²² CSEL 66.1: 183–87. See [Bay \(forthcoming\)](#) for bibliography and discussion.

with the Apocryphal Acts of Peter.²³ Here, however, we are really only interested in one aspect of the chapter: How does *De Excidio* 3.2 relate to *De Excidio* 5.22? Or does it?

In *De Excidio* 3.2, neither Peter nor Paul is called a “martyr.” At least, not in so many words. But the author and his audience obviously knew they were. The martyr deaths of Peter and Paul by cross and sword respectively were well known to late antique Christians (Eusebius, for one, made sure of that). While this passage concentrates upon Peter – the tradition has been called “anti-Pauline” – it is bookended by an introduction and conclusion that find both apostles living, and then dying, in Rome. Peter’s suffering and death are referred to several times as *passio*, particularly the “suffering of his body” (*passio sui corporis*). While in Roman parlance *passio* applied to politics and cardinal virtues, in the Christian argot it signified martyrological suffering as instituted by Christ.²⁴ *De Excidio* 3.2 is a story of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, even if they are not dubbed “martyrs” per se. No reader would have missed this. The point is obvious, it hardly needs to be made. So why am I making it?

A CONTEST OF MARTYRDOMS: *DE EXCIDIO* 3.2 AND 5.22 IN CONVERSATION AND COMPETITION

For the past decade and a half, scholarship on early Christian martyrdom has largely progressed under the auspices of an idea put forth forcefully by Elizabeth Castelli in her book *Martyrdom and Memory*.²⁵ That idea is that martyr accounts served Christians as a “usable past” that they negotiated and reshaped to establish identity, alterity, and authority.²⁶ Also influential has been Candida Moss’ stress on diversity of perspective and multiplicities of meaning within Christian martyrology (or martyrography).²⁷ The way in which Christians of earlier generations had died as “witnesses” was seen to carry implications for who later Christians were, and what they were like. This malleability of martyrs for Christians mirrors a key facet of Roman

²³ E.g., Pseudo-Linus’ *Martyrdom of Blessed Peter the Apostle*, Pseudo-Abdias’ *Passion of Peter*, and Ambrose’s *Sermon against Auxentius* 13. See Eastman 2019, 82, 193–94; 2015, 28–29, 26, 69, 87n35, 91n41, 318, 331. Earlier see Bell 1990.

²⁴ Estève 1987, XVIII. *De Excidio* 5.2.1 notes the Maccabees’ *passio*.

²⁵ Castelli 2004.

²⁶ A key process in the Christianization of the Roman Empire post Constantine: Grig 2004.

²⁷ Moss 2012.

exemplarity as described by Matthew Roller and Rebecca Langlands (and others): *Exempla* were contestable, bendable, unstable.²⁸ In part these discourses operated vis-à-vis the Roman Empire, which had once martyred Christians yet with which Christians, somewhat awkwardly, came to identify over the course of the long fourth century. These discourses also developed with an eye to the Christian's perpetual proximate other: the Jew.²⁹

No one has been more influential than Daniel Boyarin in establishing martyrdom discourse as a site of cultural engagement and competition between Jews and Christians in late antiquity. In his book *Dying for God*, Boyarin himself engages the *Quo Vadis?* tradition (from the Apocryphal Acts of Peter).³⁰ He sees in the story dramatized evidence of Christian ambivalence regarding the martyr's death: "shall we run away to continue doing the Lord's work, or be crucified with Christ?" For him, the *Quo Vadis?* story is unambiguous: "the Christian teacher must accept martyrdom in accord with the exemplum of his Lord." Boyarin finds similar discussions in contemporary rabbinic texts; he suggests that Christians had always to answer this "martyr question," whereas Jews could leave it open. In fact, evidence for contemporary Jewish martyrology is sparse: Rabbinic literature dwells little on martyrdom, and the rabbinic notion of the "sanctification of the name" (*Kiddush ha-Shem*) is not necessarily identical to Christian martyrdom in any instance.³¹ It is by no means clear that contemporary rabbis would have had a category for "martyrdom" in the way that many fourth- and fifth-century Christians did – indeed, they might have challenged the notion.³² Yet Boyarin sees Jewish and Christian martyr discourses as being in conversation in late antiquity (especially the fourth century); he sees them as mutually illuminating vis-à-vis the creation of Christianity and Judaism ("by fiat," as he would say). Here Boyarin is engaging two opposing arguments: Either Christian martyr discourses drew their inspiration from

²⁸ Roller 2018, 34; Langlands 2018, 62–63.

²⁹ The vilification of Jews would be a long-term consequence of Christian martyr discourse: Salisbury 2004, 58–69.

³⁰ Boyarin 1999, 42–66, quotes at 45–46, then 66, then 93.

³¹ See van Henten and Avemarie 2002, 132–76.

³² Hadjittofi and Sivan 2020, reading the biblical Rachel presented in Lamentations Rabbah (Proem 24) as recasting "the core of Christian martyrdom, namely, the will to sacrifice the self to get close (or closer) to the divine, by questioning the very meaning of martyrdom. How far does one have to go to reach the divine and to touch God's own heart? Martyrological narratives provide one sweeping answer; the midrash presents nuanced reflections." Cf. Ottenheim 2015.

Jewish (i.e., Maccabean) tradition, as argued by W. H. C. Frend,³³ or Christian martyrdom was a product of the Roman–Christian interface, as put forth by Glen Bowersock.³⁴ Neither argument works, Boyarin contends; instead, “the making of martyrdom was at least in part, part and parcel of the process of the making of Judaism and Christianity as distinct entities.” Within this conversation, *De Excidio* 3.2 and 5.22 have something to say.

My argument is that *De Excidio* 3.2 and 5.22, taken together, bespeak a “contest of martyrdoms” at work within *De Excidio*. Jewish martyrdom and Christian martyrdom are implicitly measured against one another across the span of the narrative, even though Jewish martyrdom remains always only theoretical and Christian martyrdom is not named as such. This stands much in line with what we have seen in previous chapters: Ps-Hegesippus distinguishes Jews from Hebrews and thus implicitly from Christians (Chapter 2); Ps-Hegesippus is interested in showing what kind of people the Jews are, especially in their approach to death, even noble death (Chapter 3);³⁵ Ps-Hegesippus distinguishes the Jews ethically from their more noble ancestors by comparisons that illustrate national decline (Chapter 4). Biblical *exempla* act as tools in the rhetorical construction of all these ideas. In *De Excidio* 5.22, biblical *exempla* serve similar purposes: They show what noble death does and does not look like, what martyrdom *is* (and is not), eventually revealing that Matthias is not a martyr. He is simply a Jew whose wartime mistake cost him his life (and those of his sons). But *De Excidio* is not without examples of real martyrs. At *De Excidio* 3.2 we find the “true” martyrs of the first century, the Christian figure-heads Peter and Paul. The contrast between Peter and Paul on the one hand and Matthias and sons on the other is striking. The reader of *De Excidio* is met with two sets of potential martyrs. The first, Peter and Paul, do not need to be labeled martyrs – this was obvious, and everyone knew it. The second group, Matthias and sons, are clearly *not* martyrs, though they suffered what the martyrs had. The effect of juxtaposing these two would-be martyr groups is to inaugurate a competition of martyrdoms, as it were, and to announce the winner *ab initio*. Who in the tumultuous first century under Rome spoke truth to power by dying as “witnesses” to God before the Empire? Ps-Hegesippus’ answer to this

³³ Frend 1965.

³⁴ Bowersock 2010.

³⁵ Eleazar’s use of Abraham in *De Excidio* 5.53.1 in many ways resembles martyr discourse.

question is implicit, but unmistakable: Christians were martyrs for God, Jews were not. Ps-Hegesippus is thus an active contributor to the late antique industry that Boyarin identified: the martyrological manufacture of Christianity and Judaism. However, let us be careful to note that all evidence points to *De Excidio* undertaking an internal, intra-Christian discourse about Jewish and Christian martyrdom. It need not be the case that Ps-Hegesippus knew of contemporary theories or stories of Jewish martyrdom; rather, Ps-Hegesippus is likely just using Jews to think with (about martyrdom), in line with David Nirenberg's discussion of anti-Jewish thought as a tradition in which Jews and Jewishness held power as ideas, unmoored from the real world *per se*.³⁶

That *De Excidio* implies such a contrast cannot have been lost on an author like Ps-Hegesippus. I doubt it was accidental. Instead, I imagine that Ps-Hegesippus was interested in the question, a current one in the fourth century according to Boyarin, of whose deaths really counted as martyrdoms and what that meant for their identities. But Ps-Hegesippus, of course, does not share Boyarin's view that borderlines were fuzzy between Christians and Jews into late antiquity.³⁷ For him, the dividing line shone starkly through the history of the first century. It was as clear as the difference between Peter and Paul here and Matthias there. The way in which Ps-Hegesippus imagined this difference, and the way in which he imagined a first-century Jew would have imagined it, was by means of *exempla*. In *De Excidio* 5.22, the Maccabean mother, Saul and Jonathan, Jeconiah and Zedekiah all embody right and wrong ways to sacrifice oneself, or not, on the altar of patriotism and piety (I do not think that national and religious loyalties would or could have been easily distinguished by Ps-Hegesippus or the first-century Jews he imagines).³⁸ Through these exemplary lenses Ps-Hegesippus gauged the legitimacy of Matthias' potential martyr death, and found it wanting. The real martyrs, on the other hand, Peter and Paul, had the best *exemplum* possible in Jesus Christ. It was the Lord's death they imitated, even if not referred to as *exempla* or *martyres* in *De Excidio* *per se*. The proof of this is in the narrative pudding: In the first century, Christians like Peter and Paul had manifestly died for God; the Jews had simply died.

³⁶ Nirenberg 2013, 3: "Judaism' ... is not only the religion of a specific people with specific beliefs, but also a category, a set of ideas and attributes with which non-Jews can make sense of and criticize their world."

³⁷ See also Boyarin 2004.

³⁸ See Barton and Boyarin 2016; Nongbri 2013.

MACCABEES AND MARTYRDOM IN *DE EXCIDIO*
AND CHRISTIAN LATE ANTIQUITY

Ps-Hegesippus' overt comparison of Matthias and sons to the Maccabean mother-martyr and her sons in *De Excidio* 5.22 allows us to place his work within a current of conversations that took place in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. By Ps-Hegesippus' time, Christians had long appreciated and utilized the Maccabean martyrdom tale of 2 Macc 7 and 4 Macc.³⁹ The Maccabees had become stock *exempla* among early Christians.⁴⁰ These heroes were often styled as models for Christian martyrdom.⁴¹ Cyprian of Carthage, Origen of Alexandria, and Hippolytus of Rome all provide examples of Christians making such a cultural appropriation.⁴² Within this discourse, Leonard Rutgers has noted that early Christian authors tended "to focus not so much on the theological implications of martyrdom," but rather "stressed the actual sufferings" themselves.⁴³ This is, in fact, more or less what Ps-Hegesippus does in *De Excidio* 5.22. Yet not all Christians were agreed that the Maccabees made appropriate paradigms for Christians: Had they not died for *Jewish* law and country and not for any inherently "Christian" reason? Thus, even as Ambrose and John Chrysostom testify to a burgeoning Christian liturgy revolving around the Maccabees in the late fourth century,⁴⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus and Augustine both note a popular strain of dissent concerning the appropriateness of their veneration:⁴⁵ "The whole-hearted acceptance of the Maccabees by important representatives of the church led to a feeling of unease among certain Christians."⁴⁶ But this did not stop leaders like Ambrose, Augustus, and Gregory Nazianzen from lionizing the Maccabean martyrs.⁴⁷

While Christians often, if sometimes uncomfortably, made the Maccabean martyrs models for their own piety and practice, some portrayed them

³⁹ See generally Joslyn-Siemiatkoski 2009, who notes "that late antique Christian appropriations of the Maccabean martyrs turned them into hybridized figures that represented the place of Jewish figures in rhetoric accompanying the Christianization of the late Roman Empire and the transformation of its cultural discourses" (79).

⁴⁰ See first and foremost van Henten 1997, 210–43.

⁴¹ van Henten 2017.

⁴² Cyprian *Exhortatio ad martyrium* 11; Origen *Exhortatio ad martyrium* 23–27; Hippolytus *In Dan.* 2.21, 35.

⁴³ Rutgers 2009, 28.

⁴⁴ John Chrysostom *Hom. in Sanctos Maccabaeos* 1–2 (PG 50: 617–26); Ambrose *Ep.* 40.16.

⁴⁵ Gregory *Or.* 15.1; Augustine *Serm.* 300.2.

⁴⁶ Rutgers 2009, 31.

⁴⁷ Gregory *Or.* 15.8; Augustine *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 68.3; cf. Ambrose *Off.* 1.41.212.

as *exempla* for contemporary Jews. The fifth-century encyclical letter of Bishop Severus of Minorca records an encounter between the Jews of that island and a Christian contingent arriving with the bones of St. Stephen. This advent was seen as an act of war, in the face of which local Jews began stockpiling weapons in their synagogue in anticipation of violence. We read that “the Jews meanwhile were exhorting one another with *exempla* from the time of the Maccabees, even to the point that they desired death on behalf of their statutes.”⁴⁸ Scholars have seen this as a clash between Christian and Jewish saints/*exempla*.⁴⁹ Ross Kraemer labeled the encounter a kind of “competition.”⁵⁰ The Maccabees were not only and always understood to be *exempla* for Christians in late antiquity – they could also appear as what they initially were, representatives of a decidedly Jewish cause.⁵¹

In reality, the Jews of late antiquity are not known to have been major promoters of the Maccabees: “Whenever the Maccabean brothers and their mother appeared in [rabbinic] literature, their primary purpose was to help set the stage for the rabbis to develop their own and distinctively Jewish notion of martyrdom.”⁵² It may be that a Jewish synagogue in Antioch, later taken over by Christians, was named after the Maccabean brothers, but it seems unlikely that a cult of the Maccabean martyrs – bones, relics, and all – existed among the Jews of that city; in all likelihood, as Rutgers suggests, the Christians invented this “Jewish” cult only to claim it subsequently for themselves.⁵³ In reality, the Maccabees were, like the rest of the literary legacy of Hellenistic Judaism, almost entirely the purview of Christian authors in late antiquity.⁵⁴ But, as is so often the case, the Christian imaginary was another story altogether.

⁴⁸ Severus of Minorca *Ep.* 8.4 (PL 20: 734): *Iudaei igitur exemplis se Machabaei temporis exhortantes, mortem quoque pro defendendis legitimis suis desiderant.* Translation adapted from Bradbury 1996, 87.

⁴⁹ Bradbury 1996, 29, 44: “On the divine level, this consisted of a struggle between divine patrons: the Maccabees vs. St Stephen.”

⁵⁰ Kraemer 2009, 662: “The convenient recovery and display of the relics of Stephen appear to have been deployed as a major Christian weapon in the co-optation of the prestige of the Maccabean martyrs for Christian consumption, a competition that had apparently heated up considerably in Syrian Antioch in the late fourth century.” (Recall again that Ps-Hegesippus may have been from Antioch.)

⁵¹ A similar Christian assumption regarding the inherent “Jewishness” of the Maccabean legacy may be found in the early fifth-century Synesius of Cyrene, who had a Jewish captain for his sea voyage from Alexandria to Cyrene and thus referred to him as “the Maccabee” (*Ep.* 5). See Stern 1974, 3.53.90.

⁵² Rutgers 2009, 33; Shepkaru 2006; Stemberger 1992.

⁵³ Rutgers 2009, 42–45.

⁵⁴ Rajak 2013; see also Pizzolato and Somenzi 2005.

For all their apparent Jewishness, Ps-Hegesippus treats the Maccabean martyrs as being of a kind with other Hebrew heroes of old. At *De Excidio* 5.2, the author himself remembers the Maccabees as patriotic and heroic. At other times, Ps-Hegesippus recalls the Maccabees from a third-person Jewish perspective: He imagines how *Jews* (like Matthias) would have thought about the Maccabees as *exempla* rather than making them relevant to late ancient Christians per se. In this he echoes Eusebius, who mentions an account of “the struggles of the manly Hebrews who are described in the [other] books called *Maccabees* endured for their piety toward God.”⁵⁵ Not insignificantly, Eusebius attributes this book to Josephus, who complemented the Books of the Maccabees in providing a basis for the Maccabean tradition that early Christians received. Like Eusebius, Ps-Hegesippus extols the Maccabees, under the influence of Josephus, as a credit to the Jews’ ancestral past.

One thing is clear: In making mention of the Maccabean martyrs Ps-Hegesippus betrays himself as a man of his time. But what is Ps-Hegesippus’ distinctive contribution to this Christian cultural conversation that came to a head in the late fourth century? Does he make one? I submit that the “contest of martyrdoms” for which I argued earlier in fact embodies the ambivalence of Christianity in the late fourth century toward the Maccabees as martyrs. On the one hand, like most other Christian writers, Ps-Hegesippus allows for a nobility within the Maccabees that renders them exemplary and special within Jewish history; as we saw in [Chapter 2](#), he may implicitly class them as Hebrews as opposed to Jews. Regarding the Maccabean martyrs in particular, Ps-Hegesippus exalts them at *De Excidio* 5.2 and 5.22. In *De Excidio*, the mother and her seven sons are the only ones whom he ever classes as *martyres* per se. At the same time, however, Ps-Hegesippus only ever makes such mentions in Jewish contexts. That is, the Maccabees are presented as model martyrs *for Jews*. His treating them as *Jewish* martyrs, in contradistinction to Christian martyrs, is striking – most Christians of Ps-Hegesippus’ time did not make such a segregation. Why would they? At *De Excidio* 5.2 the author is talking to Jerusalem and its Jewish inhabitants, and 5.22 is a discursive context in which speaker, listeners, and ancestral *exempla* recalled within the speech are all Jewish. The

⁵⁵ Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 3.10.6 (LCL 153: 228): τῶν ἐν τοῖς οὕτω καλουμένοις Μακκαβαϊκοῖς συγγράμμασιν ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰς τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβείας ἀνδρισμένων Ἑβραίων περιέχειν. Translation [Schott 2019](#), 136. But cf. *Hist. Eccl.* 5.1.55, where the Maccabean mother is a model for Christian women.

one time *De Excidio* mentions Christian martyrs, on the other hand, the Maccabees are nowhere in sight. And why would they be? Peter and Paul had no need of Hasmonean heroes to model embodied virtue for them. They were apostles of the Lord, the new biblical *exempla* – their credentials spoke for themselves.

Ps-Hegesippus wrote at a time in which the Maccabean martyrs were known to be potential martyrological paradigms for Christians. Yet they were also known to be *Jewish* martyrs, and thus their usage was contested. *De Excidio* reflects this ambiguity in its use of the Maccabean martyrs. It affords them privilege of place within the martyrological imagination, but only applies them to Jewish contexts. Christian martyrs, it seems, needed no such role models – after all, Peter’s death was explicitly (albeit invertedly) modeled on that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Further, within the “contest of martyrdoms” that emerges from *De Excidio* 3.2 and 5.22, the Maccabees are simultaneously venerated and Judaized: They were heroes, but not necessarily Christian ones. The Maccabees float as venerable if uneasy specters in the background of Ps-Hegesippus’ martyrological message, if we may speak of one, in which first-century Jews sometimes *look like* martyrs, but are not; rather, Christians emerge as the true martyrs, inserted into the background of the end of Jewish history.

* * *

To return this chapter to the larger question of this book: Here we have seen yet another facet of the rhetorical utility of *exempla* within the structure of *De Excidio*. They contribute not a little to its rare and sporadic, yet nevertheless powerful, discussion of martyrdom as legitimizing performance. At *De Excidio* 5.22, Matthias stands in for Jews who might be seen as innocent, who died as noncombatants in the first-century encounter between Judea and Rome. By way of comparison to ancestral *exempla*, couched within the familiar literary subgenre of historiographical speeches, Ps-Hegesippus voices his take on the issue: The Jews who died in the Roman–Jewish War, even the best of them, did not die as martyrs for their country or their God – they died as feckless rebels whose dealing in sedition came back to bite them. Elsewhere in the narrative (*De Excidio* 3.2), Ps-Hegesippus subtly inserts the real unsung heroes (as if) among the peoples of the book within first-century Rome. The Christian *doctores* Peter and Paul did not need biblical *exempla* to confirm their status as bona fide martyrs: They *were* biblical *exempla*.

This argument signals a larger issue that circulates in the background of this study. Who were the culture heroes of the Christians in late antiquity? In [Chapter 1](#) we discussed briefly how scholarship routinely casts Christian actors themselves – martyrs, ascetics, monks, bishops, preachers – as the role models of ancient Christian discourse. Yet in *De Excidio*, it is almost always, with only one exception, Hebrew heroes of biblical antiquity who serve as *exempla*. These groups of exemplars were not mutually exclusive – Christian figures often stood alongside the biblical personalities of old in the ancient Christian imagination. What the relative imbalance between Christian and Hebrew *exempla* in *De Excidio* signals is simply Ps-Hegesippus’ subject matter: He is writing a history of Jews (and Romans), and thus it is the ancestral *exempla* of the Jews (and the Romans) who appear most commonly within his storyline. The question for Ps-Hegesippus is not who the culture heroes for Christians were, but rather which culture heroes applied to a Christian take on Jewish history. The Maccabean martyrs, Hebrew heroes appropriated by Christians yet sometimes imputed to Jews (and relevant to Rome, as they embodied resistance to empire), crystallize the cultural crossroads at which *De Excidio* was built.

Ps-Hegesippus’ use of the Maccabean martyrs as *exempla*, as with his use of other biblical figures, bespeaks a late antique context in which Christians both appropriated Jewish tradition and “historicized” the Jews, to use Andrew Jacobs’ terms.⁵⁶ Ps-Hegesippus co-opts Jewish tradition in claiming authority to state the meaning of the Maccabean martyrs while simultaneously using them to historicize the Jews as a people of the past whose end came in the first century, hundreds of years before (in the person of Matthias *et alia*). It is not insignificant that Jennifer Knust has recently cited Ps-Hegesippus’ (probable) cultural milieu – the post-Julian ferment of anti-Jewish and self-establishing Christianity – as a period in which the Maccabean martyrs became fodder for the frenzied enterprise of Christian culture-making (“Christianization”).⁵⁷ The use of biblical and Maccabean *exempla* in *De Excidio* 5.22, as elsewhere in the work, denotes simultaneous cultural appropriation and historiographical delegitimization: They are Ps-Hegesippus’ to use, co-opted by Christian author from Jewish legacy, and they make the Jews look bad.

⁵⁶ Jacobs 2004; see also the essays in Dohrmann and Reed 2013.

⁵⁷ Knust 2020.

This chapter is a capstone for the first half of this book. We have seen certain dynamics of *exempla* across *De Excidio*: Biblical *exempla* serve to frame the Jews as a historical people, as an ethnic group, as inferior to their ancestors, and now as non-martyrs. The following chapters take different angles, focusing upon key figures (Chapters 6 and 7) and key passages (Chapters 8 and 9) that illustrate other aspects of Ps-Hegesippus' biblical-classical exemplarity.

King David as Christian-Classical *Exemplum* in Pseudo-Hegesippus

King David was one of the most popular biblical figures of Christian antiquity. He is also the most frequently mentioned biblical figure in *De Excidio*.¹ As such, David may serve as one metric for measuring particular aspects of how Hebrew heroes function in this work. Ps-Hegesippus uses David in conversation with the Jewish Scriptures, Josephus, and early Christianity. At the same time, however, *De Excidio*'s portrait of David is distinct. It is striking in its lack of certain Christian theological commonplaces. Here I will argue that Ps-Hegesippus' David in many ways reflects the "secular" *exempla* of Roman historiography more than the allegorized, typologized, theologized, Christologized David usual within late antique Christianity. I will also argue that *De Excidio*'s David is dynamic, catalyzing a number of rhetorical functions across the narrative.

To understand Ps-Hegesippus' configuration of David, we need to understand what kind of David he inherited. King David's biblical legacy is well known.² The Hebrew Bible devotes more space to him than to any other character. Nor are David's faults hidden by the Bible. His biblical persona is as king and messiah; penitent, genteel, and capable leader; and wise spiritual teacher. The David of the Jewish Scriptures is human, to be sure, but he is a hero.³ In Josephus, David is largely the same, though the messianic edge of David's personality may be blunted. Josephus knew

¹ As with Josephus, so with Ps-Hegesippus, "one criterion of the importance which [he] assigns to his Biblical personalities is the sheer amount of space he devotes to them"; Feldman 1998b, 334.

² See Alter 1999; McKenzie 2000, esp. ix.

³ Halpern 2001, esp. 5–6.

the dangers of exalting messianic figures within first-century Rome; at least, this is what Louis Feldman suggested. Feldman identified themes by which Josephus distinguished David (in *Jewish Antiquities*): genealogy, appearance, wealth, wisdom, courage, temperance, justice, piety, and poetic, scholarly, and musical capacities. Within the early Roman Empire, “Josephus appeals to the political, literary, and romantic interests of his readers.”⁴

For all his enthusiasm for the great king, Josephus’ treatment of David in the *Jewish War* is highly restricted. On the one hand, this makes sense: Why would an ancient Israelite king need to appear in a narrative of first-century events? But Feldman explains this dearth thus:

Despite the obvious significance of David, as ancestor of the messiah, for the revolutionary movements that spearheaded the Jewish revolt against the Romans, Josephus, obviously sensitive to a charge of disloyalty if he were to mention the influence of the messianic idea, totally suppresses the messianic aspect of the revolt and refers to David only infrequently in the *Jewish War*, noting merely David’s wealth (*War* 1.61); the fact that he was the father of Solomon, the first builder of the Temple (*War* 5.137) (implying that Solomon is more famous); the fact that he and Solomon built the first wall of Jerusalem (*War* 5.143); and the incident in which David expelled the Canaanite population of Jerusalem and established his own people there (*War* 6.439).⁵

Three of these four mentions of David in the *Jewish War* are adapted in *De Excidio*. Moreover, it is not impossible that Ps-Hegesippus was influenced by Josephus’ portrayal of David in the *Jewish Antiquities*, though evidence for this is meager. Indeed, we will see that in his portrayal of King David Ps-Hegesippus followed Josephus to a very limited extent. His portrayal of the Son of Jesse is unique, and not beholden to his Jewish source. Ps-Hegesippus drew upon the Bible more than Josephus. He also seems to have drawn on Christian traditions current in and before his day.

David was as popular within Christian antiquity as The Beatles were in the 1960s. Yet nothing like an exhaustive survey of his appearance in the literature exists. In what follows, I measure Ps-Hegesippus’ portrayal of David not only against its biblical and Josephan precursors, but also against its late antique Christian peers and even certain classical traditions. Together these comparanda reveal a David who appears in

⁴ Feldman 1998a, 562, in contrast with the rabbis’ stress on “the religious achievements of David.”

⁵ Feldman 1998a, 539.

ways more classical, and less overtly Christian, than one might expect. Ps-Hegesippus' David constitutes a unique contribution to Christian late antiquity. For thematic coherence, we will examine the David of *De Excidio* vis-à-vis his three overarching roles: namely, as (1) King, (2) Prophet, (3) and Family Man (father/husband).

DOMINUS, REX: KING DAVID AS KING IN *DE EXCIDIO*

First, and perhaps foremost, King David figures as a king in *De Excidio*. He offers Ps-Hegesippus a way to imbue the famous city of Jerusalem with traditionary weight, mobilize various perspectives on ideal civic leadership and kingship, and meld sacred and secular ideas of success. At times, this throws David's biblical career into a surprising light.

King David's first appearance, in Book 1 of *De Excidio*, should be read alongside another appearance he makes in the final book (Book 5). At both *De Excidio* 1.1.8 and 5.9.1, David is connected to Jerusalem as a founding figurehead. At 1.1.8, Ps-Hegesippus describes John Hyrcanus' defense of Jerusalem against Antiochus VII Sidetes. He follows Josephus' *Jewish War* (1.61), and perhaps *Jewish Antiquities* (13.247–49),⁶ in saying:

Hyrcanus repelled him with gold whom he was not able to repel with iron, and after, as Josephus relates, the tomb of David had been opened, he seized three hundred which he paid to Antiochus, so that he might abandon the siege; and having been bought with this price, Antiochus departed.

De Excidio 1.1.87

While only mentioned in passing, David's name here signals his historical significance as a figure literally “built into” Jerusalem. Biblical tradition casts Jerusalem as a standard burial place for kings – it comes to be called “the city of David.”⁸ Small wonder, if David was the architect of Jerusalem's civic space. This feature of his legacy emerges later:

A certain Canaanite ruler, who was called a just king in the local language, founded the city of Jerusalem, which he at first called Solyma, and thereafter he added a temple, whence the city is called Hierosolyma. From the beginning it held

⁶ See Bay 2021C, 5–6.

⁷ CSEL 66.1: 7.

⁸ 2 Sam 5:9; 1 Kgs 2:10, 11:43, 14:31, 15:8, 15:24, 22:50; 2 Kgs 8:24, 9:28, 12:21, 14:20, 15:7, 15:38, 16:20; 1 Chr 11:5, 7; 2 Chr 9:31, 12:16, 14:1, 16:14, 21:1, 21:20, 24:16, 25:28. The “city of David” was sometimes called Zion (2 Sam 5:7) or Bethlehem (Luke 2:4). Jesus and David call Jerusalem “the city of the great king” (Ps 48:2b; Matt 5:35).

as its inhabitants those from the race of the Canaanites. David was the first man of the Hebrew race to expel the Canaanites, establish his own [people], and make in the city a royal residence for himself. And he planned on constructing a temple to God, but, prohibited by an oracle, left it to his heir Solomon, who erected the temple which he himself had wanted to.

De Excidio 5.9.1⁹

Here Ps-Hegesippus picks up Josephus' *War* 6.439–42, although there, unlike in *De Excidio*, David's appearance marks a survey of Jerusalem from its beginnings to its destruction, ending the penultimate book (Book 6) of that work. In *De Excidio*, David is remembered as effective *conditor* ("founder") of Jerusalem and would-be *conditor* of its Temple, the first man of the Hebrews (*primus uir gentis Hebraeae*) to claim the city.¹⁰ (Ps-Hegesippus neglects to mention *why* David did not build the Temple: because he was a "man of blood.")¹¹ *De Excidio* is about the city of Jerusalem. As founder of that city, no wonder David is the work's most frequent *exemplum*.

The two passages cited point to an important aspect of David's kingly legacy in *De Excidio*: His narrativized fame is not just scriptural or textual but physical, material, structural. David not only settled and conquered Jerusalem: He acted as its civic fountainhead, envisioning its religious architecture, what would become one of the great edifices of the ancient world once completed by his heir Solomon. David is a figure defined by biblical *text* yet whose presence is said to exist – and actually does exist – *materially* in Jerusalem and Judea.¹² Josephus, writing not long before Trajan, connected David concretely to Jerusalem in a way that echoes the set of cultural values communicated by a monument like Trajan's column.¹³ Josephus was doing a Roman thing in Rome, and Ps-Hegesippus picked this up centuries later.

Of course, the mapping of national *exempla* onto state monuments was not restricted to the comic-strip-like columns of Trajan or Marcus Aurelius (also in Rome) or Constantine (in Constantinople): The entire

⁹ CSEL 66.1: 309. Cf. *Sibylline Oracle* 4.115–18, 125–27.

¹⁰ Cf. 2 Sam 5:7–9; 1 Chr 11:5–7.

¹¹ See 1 Chr 28:3; cf. 2 Sam 16:7.

¹² The famous Tel Dan inscription, an Aramaic epigraph on a fragmentary stela from the mid-eighth century BCE, records an Aramean king's boast to have defeated two of his neighbors to the south: the "king of Israel" and the "king of the House of David" (BYTDWD). This is in fact some of the earliest archaeological evidence of biblical personalities in general. See Shanks 2013; 1994. Athas 2003, 280 reads the inscription's toponym "house of David" (בית דוד) as effectively equivalent to the biblical "city of David" (עיר דוד).

¹³ On art/architecture as mirrors of cultural values in the early Roman Empire, see Zanker 1990.

Roman world, and especially Rome itself, to this day testifies to landscapes of memory where exemplary figures find immortality within physical structures.¹⁴ Matthew Roller, taking Horatius Cocles as a case study, has explored how monuments associated with a given figure could help explain, and be explained by, various narrative traditions involving such personalities. This Roman habit of linking place and personality is echoed in Josephus' and then Ps-Hegesippus' presentation of David.

The conceptual coupling of physical monument with textual tradition and exemplary figure was a commonplace of Ps-Hegesippus' world.¹⁵ It is true that Ps-Hegesippus' associations of King David with Jerusalem have precedents in Josephus' *Jewish War* and in the Bible. But his presentations of Jerusalem's famous founder are idiosyncratic and thus should be taken seriously as marking his own take on King David vis-à-vis the city of David. For example, the Latin of Ps-Hegesippus' presentation of David at *De Excidio* 5.9.1 makes it impossible not to recall what is perhaps the most fitting Roman *comparandum* to David as king: Romulus. That mythic, ancient "founder of the city [of Rome]" (*conditor Urbis*), as (Ps-) Ovid calls him (*Cons.* 241), was, like David, well known and widely credited with establishing Rome's civic and religious structures and social foundations.¹⁶ The beginning of Florus' *Epitome of Roman History* reads like a model for *De Excidio* 5.9.1:

The first founder both of the city and of the empire was Romulus, the son of Mars and Rhea Silvia. ... Romulus ... in the first ardour of youth, expelled his uncle from the citadel and restored his grandfather. He himself, being a lover of the river and mountains amongst which he had been brought up, conceived the idea of building a new city. ... Being victorious in augury, he began to build the city, full of hope that it would prove warlike; for the birds, accustomed to blood and prey, seemed to indicate this. It was thought that a rampart was enough for the protection of the new city. In derision of its small size Remus leaped over it and was put to death for doing so, whether by his brother's order or not is uncertain; at any rate he was the first victim and hallowed the fortification of the new city with his blood.

Florus *Epitome* 1.1, 5, 8¹⁷

¹⁴ Roller 2018, 32–65.

¹⁵ On the rhetoric surrounding the founding of cities in Christian late antiquity, see Falcasantos 2020.

¹⁶ Cf. Livy 1.1.7 (*Ita solus potitus imperio Romulus; condita urbs conditoris nomine appellata*); Seneca the Elder *Controversiae* 7.6 (*Romulus, horum moenium conditor et sacratus caelo parens*); Tacitus *Ann.* 4.9 (where *conditor urbis Romulus* appears amidst numerous national heroes in a funerary parade of ancestral images); 11.24 (*conditor nostri Romulus*); Valerius Maximus 3.2 praef. (*conditor urbis nostrae Romule* [in the vocative])).

¹⁷ LCL 231: 8–11.

Romulus is *primus conditor* of the Roman *urbs*,¹⁸ “of the race” of Mars (*genitus Marte*), born of a priestess (*sacerdos*; 1.2). This is just the kind of multivalent founder that David is for Ps-Hegesippus.¹⁹ Just as David expelled (*expulit*) the Canaanites from Jerusalem, so Romulus expelled (*deturbat*) his uncle Amulius from Rome’s citadel (restoring his grandfather, Numitor; 1.4). Just as David’s building program was directed by oracle (*oraculo*), so Romulus (and Remus) consulted the gods in establishing Rome (1.6). The parallels between David and Romulus just keep coming: At *De Excidio* 5.9.1 David is presented as having first conceived of building a temple in Jerusalem (*uoluit et templum deo condere*), so in Florus’ *Epitome* Romulus is said to have “conceived the idea of building a new city” (*moenia nouae urbis agitabat*; 1.5) and to have “brought into being the idea of a city rather than an actual city” (*imaginem urbis magis quam urbem fecerat*; 1.9); that is, before its being populated. Both Romulus and David were famous for being “men of blood.”²⁰ Both Romulus and David were even remembered with famous tombs in their respective cities,²¹ leaving monumental memorials that long outlived their namesakes.²² When compared to Romulus, the portrayal of David in *De Excidio* 5.9.1 and 1.1.8 comes alive. David, like Romulus, is ancient king and progenitor, figurehead of the nation’s capital par excellence and still discernible upon the physical layout of the latter-day cityscape.

David is remembered in *De Excidio* as an *exemplum* whose permanent mark was stamped upon the built *realia* of Jerusalem. His actions made him memorable. One particular instance of David’s virtuous leadership is

¹⁸ Cf. Hercules at Sallust *Bellum Jugurthinum* 89.4 and Evander (*rex Euandrus Romanae conditor arcis*) at Vergil *Aeneid* 8.313.

¹⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus (27.3.7) charges Trajan with vanity for inscribing his name on old buildings throughout Rome that previous emperors had adorned, not as “restorer of old buildings” (*ueterum instaurator*) but “as their founder” (*conditor*). He later (30.9.1) says that Gratian, who could claim to be a “founder of towns and defenses” (*oppidorum et limitum conditor*), could have had a career like Trajan or Marcus Aurelius (both of whom erected columns) had he kept his behavior in check. Ammianus’ language (30.8.13, 30.9.1) is redolent of exemplary discourse.

²⁰ David was prohibited from building the Jerusalem Temple because he was a “man of war” and had shed blood (1 Chr 28:3; cf. 2 Sam 16:7); likewise, Romulus is famously reputed to have killed his brother Remus for leaping over the rampart of the recently built Rome in derision of its size: Florus 1.8 says that Remus “hallowed the fortification of the new city with his blood” (*munitionemque urbis novae sanguine suo consecravit*).

²¹ The tombs/houses of David and Romulus are objects of recent discovery: Jarus 2018; Metcalfe 2020.

²² Romulus was associated with a stick and reed hut standing on the Palatine Hill in the first century CE (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1.79.11); on this, and *exempla* vis-à-vis monuments in Roman culture, Blits 2014, 58–60.

recalled several times by Ps-Hegesippus. First, in a speech at *De Excidio* 3.16 (see [Chapter 8](#)),²³ Josephus' Jewish comrades encourage him not to capitulate to the Romans, but to die bravely in opposition (by suicide, if necessary). They employ King Saul and his son Jonathan as *exempla* who were willing to die for their country (the Roman ideal of *mori pro patria*).²⁴ Ps-Hegesippus has these soldiers recall David's self-sacrifice on behalf of Israel:

And David himself, when he saw the people struck by the angel, willed that the heavenly vengeance be turned toward himself, lest he be saved while the people perished.

De Excidio 3.16.1²⁵

Here Ps-Hegesippus vicariously recalls David's intercessory action recorded at 2 Sam 24:17//1 Chr 21:17. There, the people of Israel are being plagued by three days of pestilence as divine chastisement. On seeing this, David begs the Lord that the punishment be visited upon him ("and his father's house"), not the people. Ps-Hegesippus recalls this episode again at *De Excidio* 5.2 (see [Chapter 4](#)). There David is juxtaposed to the Jewish (rebel) leaders of the narrative:

Come forth, David ... and behold ... how each of the leaders would offer the entire people up to death, so that he wrests liberty for himself, [a people] for which you offered your very self to death.

De Excidio 5.2.1²⁶

Again Ps-Hegesippus apparently has in mind 2 Sam 24//1 Chr 21. His twofold reference to this pericope suggests that this moment held peculiar salience for how Ps-Hegesippus understood David as King, and perhaps how he understood ideal kingship/leadership: There was nobility in self-sacrifice. This ethical coloring of David as a monarch who imperils himself on behalf of his people resonates strongly with the world of Roman *exempla*: Marcus Curtius earned immortal renown by throwing himself (and his horse) headlong into a massive, unfillable chasm that appeared in the middle of the Roman Forum. He did this to appease wrath incurred from the gods. "He sacrificed himself" (*se deuouisse*).²⁷

²³ Based on Josephus *War* 3.356–60, which does not contain these *exempla*; Bell 1977, 172–73, 188.

²⁴ Speidel 2010.

²⁵ CSEL 66.1: 211.

²⁶ CSEL 66.1: 296.

²⁷ Livy 7.6.1–6.

Rebecca Langlands calls this “the Archetypal [Roman] Exemplum”²⁸ and Valerius Maximus lauds it among his exemplary tales of “loyalty to fatherland” (*pietas erga patriam*).²⁹ The David of *De Excidio* is a character cut from the same cloth.

As the “speaker” at *De Excidio* 5.2, Ps-Hegesippus uses David’s intercession as an ethical gauge for measuring the leadership virtue of the Jewish rebels who are held responsible for Jerusalem’s destruction: David offered himself to restore *libertas* to the *populus*, the Jewish rebels hand the *populus* over to death in order to distort *libertas*. At the same time, Ps-Hegesippus sees this episode as a realistic *exemplum* to put into the mouths of Josephus’ Jewish countrymen (3.16). For both author and characters, this side of David’s legacy is assumed as the ideal for self-effacing leadership. Ps-Hegesippus understood this tradition to be widely known, something both first-century Jews and fourth-century Christians would recognize. Langlands has shown how Roman “heroes and their deeds were celebrated publicly and their stories were known and told by everyone and were common currency.”³⁰ Ps-Hegesippus’ use of David betrays similar assumptions.

David’s appearance in the contexts mentioned also demonstrates the contestable nature of *exempla*. At *De Excidio* 3.16 David’s intercession is used in an argument for death on behalf of one’s country, and at *De Excidio* 5.2 it stands as tacit testimony condemning the selfish leadership of the first-century Jewish rebels. Yet in both contexts, one could imagine a listener-interlocutor objecting to this argumentation. What, after all, had first caused the plague upon Israel that prompted David’s expiatory response? It was David himself. Whatever larger forces were at work in the background,³¹ 2 Sam 24 and 1 Chr 21 both make perfectly clear that David was the reason for the plague upon Israel,³² namely by undertaking a census that angered the Lord. Thus, Josephus could have responded to his comrades at Jotapata, and “Jerusalem” to the narrator at 5.2, that David was hardly noble in this sacrifice: He merely stepped in to stop a

²⁸ Langlands 2018, 16–46.

²⁹ Valerius Maximus 5.6.2.

³⁰ Langlands 2018, 129.

³¹ At 2 Sam 24:1 “the anger of the LORD” caused David to take the ill-advised census; at 1 Chr 21:1 Satan incites David to it. These explanations need not necessarily be viewed as mutually exclusive, considering the larger biblical logic(s) at work governing such causalities (see 1 Kgs 22:19–23; Job 1:1–2:7; Zech 3:1–2). Josephus solves the problem by omitting any external cause (*Ant.* 7.318; Feldman 1998a, 559).

³² See 2 Sam 24:17a; 1 Chr 21:17.

destruction that his foolish actions had caused to begin with and that had already cost the lives of 70,000 people (2 Sam 24:15//1 Chr 21:14). The census episode reveals the unstated “fundamentally controversial” nature of David in *De Excidio*.³³ David helps establish ethical precedents that are, even on a cursory reading, unstable and eminently refutable when measured against the Bible.

Still, in all of this Ps-Hegesippus tips his hand as an undaunted cheerleader for Israel’s great king. He twice brings up the census episode, arguably *the* low point of David’s political career, yet both times David emerges as a hero sacrificing himself on behalf of country. Within the larger tradition, David’s performance as king may not have been unstained, but in *De Excidio* he is a paradigm of regal virtue.

The closest Ps-Hegesippus ever comes to criticizing David in his capacity as king is in the long, two-part speech of Josephus that spans *De Excidio* 5.15–16 (see [Chapter 9](#)). There Josephus addresses Jewish hold-outs within Jerusalem at Titus’ behest, aiming to prevent their further resistance to Rome with several interrelated arguments. His countrymen claim to be fighting for state and freedom; Josephus sees this fight as futile and misled. He states that the Jews, while claiming to fight for *libertas*, had often experienced slavery, *servitus*. To prove this, Josephus lists the nations that had ruled over the Jews and their ancestors – Egypt, Assyria, Persia, and so on – and then moves to individuals who had ruled them. After Saul and before Solomon, he says of David:

After a time David entered into kingship over the entire people, and he was certainly a milder master but a master nonetheless. And before David rested, even he himself imposed a king upon the [Hebrew] race.

De Excidio 5.15.1³⁴

David’s reputation seems almost to stand in tension with Josephus’ larger argument: When David succeeded (*successit*) to the throne, he proved a “milder master” (*mitior dominus*) than others; but, Josephus insists, he was still a *dominus*. As an almost-exception that proves the rule, Josephus uses David, the apparent quintessence of “mild” kingship, to show that submission to a king equals servitude. Even though David gave the people rest from their enemies, he still imposed himself (*imposuit*) as *rex*.³⁵ This is not so much an indictment of David as a criticism of

³³ Langlands 2018, 13 (quote) and 258ff (argument).

³⁴ CSEL 66.1: 321–22.

³⁵ Just as Samuel had warned would happen when Israel first asked him to appoint a king over them: 1 Sam 8:11–18.

the institution of kingship. In an oblique way, Ps-Hegesippus uses David (and others) to contribute to an age-old discussion of the promises and pitfalls of monarchy by having Josephus insist upon the servile status of those living under it. For David was, by any account, the best, most successful, most popular king of ancient Israel. Yet Josephus is made to qualify this (*sed ... tamen, tamen*). At *De Excidio* 5.15.1, David constitutes a dilemma for the institution of monarchy.

In this Ps-Hegesippus' David illustrates beautifully the "capacity to convey moral knots without needing to resolve, slice through or collapse them," something that Langlands sees Roman *exempla* as "fully exploiting."³⁶ David helps Ps-Hegesippus "incorporate moral ambiguity and troubling elements" into a discussion about kingship and *servitus* versus *libertas* in which the Jews are effectively charged with having always been slaves. As *dominus* and *rex* in *De Excidio* 5.15.1, David is a radical *exemplum* capable of conveying complicated, even problematic content, inasmuch as Israel's most famous king is said to have been, in his capacity as king, something of a problem. But we should not read David's presentation here as critical of the man himself. Rather, the tone of David's treatment marks him as an exceptional proof that confirms the argument: "Even David was a *dominus*; even David acted as a *rex*." David operates as an ideal king, therefore, but the argument is that all kings are masters: Every king (*rex*) is a lord (*dominus*).

If possible, David's appearance in the following chapter, *De Excidio* 5.16, is even more enigmatic. There David appears in a relief that would give us even stronger reason to anticipate criticism of the king. But it never comes. Instead, some of David's most embarrassing moments are covered over and made to show that he acted as a divinely sanctioned and pious ruler.

In *De Excidio* 5.16 Josephus, still speaking to the Jewish rebels behind Jerusalem's walls, shifts his argument. Now he maintains that, as the Jews' own past teaches, Jewish success never came from conventional methods of warfare and diplomacy alone, but from reliance upon God characterized by prayer (*oratio*) and faith (*fides*). Since the Jews are not undertaking their resistance in cooperation with God, but are in fact resisting God in resisting Rome, they cannot hope to prevail. In making this argument, Josephus marshals the single largest compilation of biblical *exempla* in all of *De Excidio*. He provides examples of those who managed to "prevail without weapons" (*sine armis uincere*)³⁷ by seeking

³⁶ Langlands 2018, 53.

³⁷ On "vittoria senza armi," in Ambrose/Ps-Hegesippus: Somenzi 2009, 110–15.

divine aid, and those who tragically failed to do so.³⁸ In the former group David appears, with two rather surprising subtexts:

David triumphed when he had united in marriage by the prophetic mysteries with Bathsheba—that is, “Daughter of the Sabbath”—, and he even prevailed in civil war, because he shunned its introduction and did not instigate it. For nothing is more abominable in civil war than the one who was capable of instigating it.

De Excidio 5.16.1³⁹

Josephus claims that David “triumphed” (*triumphauit*) and “conquered” (*uicit*) on two fronts, in his marriage to Bathsheba and in the realm of civil war. These statements are shocking, the first in particular. David’s Bathsheba foible marks a low point in his career. One of his more famous Psalms (Ps 51) is dedicated to penitence and regret over his having impregnated Bathsheba, killed her husband, and then married her, incurring divine wrath that caused the death of their child.⁴⁰ Yet here this is counted as a “win.” Only slightly less jarring is the slotting of David’s civil wars into the win column as well. For, whatever his culpability in the matter, David’s reign was peppered with infighting, from his early run-ins with Saul that divided the nation’s loyalties (1 Sam 18ff)⁴¹ to the outright rebellion of his son Absalom and its aftermath (2 Sam 15–19)⁴² to the ultimately definitive split between Israel and Judah at the rebellion of Sheba (2 Sam 20).⁴³ Civil war seems like an embarrassing aspect of David’s legacy, not something that shows him “winning.”

While this dual portrayal of David may appear enigmatic as a construal of the biblical David, it is a textbook example of how exemplary discourse functioned in the Roman world. Recall that Langlands marks as a signal component of Roman *exempla* their ability to maintain moral ambiguity. Indeed, she considers one of her most radical conclusions to be her “claim about the capacity of exempla to incorporate and

³⁸ Because “without *religio* weapons cannot prevail” (*sine religione arma non uincant*); *De Excidio* 5.16.1.

³⁹ CSEL 66.1: 327–28.

⁴⁰ 2 Sam 11:1–12:23.

⁴¹ After David’s defeat of Goliath, Israelite women sang “Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” Saul, infuriated, then tried to kill David (1 Sam 18:1–11).

⁴² David’s military forces were split between divided factions and Absalom ended up having sex publicly with ten of David’s concubines (2 Sam 16:22), an insult David had to deal with discreetly later on (2 Sam 20:3). Furthermore, this turn of events even pitted David against his own men (e.g., 2 Sam 19:21–22).

⁴³ Cf. 2 Sam 20:1–2.

communicate contradiction and moral complexity.”⁴⁴ This is precisely the kind of discursive intricacy we find in David at *De Excidio* 5.16.1: King David was a hero in the very moment that he acted as adulterer (and eventually murderer), and his involvement in civil war was a “victory,” perhaps because it was reactive rather than instigative. But of course, this reading assumes the larger biblical backdrop, which *De Excidio* does not mention. Imagine for a moment another possible way of reading this presentation of David, one in which a reader is unfamiliar with Jewish Scriptures. That is, on its own merits *De Excidio* only ever reveals one side of David: his good side.

Ps-Hegesippus’ configuration of this David makes sense in light of both Christian and Roman tradition. First, Ps-Hegesippus’ positive spin on the David–Bathsheba union, articulated in terms of *prophetica mysteria*, finds Christian correlates in Ambrose’s *Other Apology for the Prophet David* and the anonymous, early fifth-century Latin work dubbed the *Incomplete Work on Matthew* (*Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum*).⁴⁵ Both works present David’s union with Bathsheba in positive terms by etymologizing Bathsheba’s name and by casting the union “prophetically” in terms of God/Christ and his people (the Church).⁴⁶ Ps-Hegesippus is apparently thinking along similar lines. If so, this constitutes a rare moment in which he transcends the level of *historia* in the text and, as Chiara Somenzi has pointed out, hints at an allegorized understanding of the David and Bathsheba union that is only implicit and thus not open for the reader to comprehend fully.⁴⁷ The reader is apparently expected to read a part of David’s legacy typologically, or at least symbolically, though in what sense is unclear. Even if Ps-Hegesippus dips his toes into commonplace Christian theologizing over David, he does so discreetly.

Casting David’s legacy in terms of civil war, on the other hand, has a decidedly Roman ring to it. In this, Ps-Hegesippus plays on a touchy yet central theme within Roman discourse on the state following the collapse of the Republic and the early years of the Empire.⁴⁸ Literature addressing this Roman obsession will have been included in the basic education

⁴⁴ Langlands 2018, 59.

⁴⁵ Ambrose *Apologia prophetarum David altera* 10.51; *Opus Imperf. ad Matt.* (PG 56: 620–21).

⁴⁶ See Bay 2021c, 32.

⁴⁷ Somenzi 2009, 72: “[t]ale esegesi ... è lasciata implicita e non è possibile perciò precisarne il contenuto.”

⁴⁸ See Breed, Damon, and Rossi 2010; Lucan *Bellum Civile* 1.32: “Deep are the wounds set by the hands of fellow citizens” (*alta sedent ciuilibus uulnera dextrae*).

of an author like Ps-Hegesippus, and his first-century narrative stands very close in time to Rome's most famous internal disputes. Such knowledge is likely reflected in David's portrayal in *De Excidio* 5.16. David is exonerated from blame for civil war because, far from instigating it (*non inferebat*), he resisted its onset (*refugiebat inlatum*). The question of the cause(s) of civil war, and the related question of culpability for its appearance, is one with which Roman authors had long occupied themselves. Varro, in his *On the Life of the Roman People*, imputes "the origin of civil discords" (*discordiarum ciuiliū fontem*) in Rome to a law passed during Gaius Gracchus' second tribunate in 122 BCE (the *lex frumentaria*);⁴⁹ Florus assigned the blame to Tiberius Gracchus, who eleven years earlier (133 BCE) had pushed through different legislation, stating that "the Gracchi divided the Roman people and made a two-headed citizenry from one" (*Gracchi diuiserant populum Romanum et bicipitem ex una fecerant ciuitatem*). Other authors offered different takes: Dionysius of Halicarnassus dated the onset of civil war to 630 years after the establishment of Roman customs by Romulus,⁵⁰ which may reflect the accounts of Appian (*Civil Wars* 1.1.1, 1.2.4–5) and others.⁵¹

All this is to say that Romans were very concerned with how and why civil wars started, and who was to blame. Ps-Hegesippus throws David into this history of ideas. Indeed, the proverb he inserts into the discussion of David – "For nothing is more abominable in civil war than the one who was capable of instigating it" (*Nihil enim bello ciuili foedius nisi solus qui potuit inferre*) – sounds like a *sententia* presented in Cicero's *Thirteenth Philippic*: "There is no fouler thing than such a citizen, such a man, if he is to be deemed a citizen or a man, who desires a civil war" (*Nihil igitur hoc ciue, nihil hoc homine taetrius, si aut ciuis aut homo habendus est, qui ciuile bellum concupiscit*).⁵² Given such superlative condemnation of civil war in the writings of one of the most influential Roman authors, one whom Ps-Hegesippus knew well, it is no wonder that Ps-Hegesippus exculpates David of guilt related to civil war. But why did he see the need to bring it up at all? Perhaps as a kind of anticipatory

⁴⁹ Varro *Vita populi romani* fr. 114 Riposati = Nonius 728 Lindsay (from Book 4); see Wiseman 2010, 26.

⁵⁰ Dionysius of Halicarnassus 2.11.2–3, distancing Romulus from the taint of civil war, as Ps-Hegesippus does David.

⁵¹ Wiseman 2010, 27–42. Velleius Paterculus 2.3.2–3; Cicero *De re publica* 1.31; et alia.

⁵² Cicero *Orationes philippicae* 13.2 (LCL 507: 228–29). Cf. Cicero *Epistulae ad familiares* 16.12.2: "I cried aloud that civil war is the worst of calamities" (*me clamante nihil esse bello ciuili miserius*).

apologetic, forestalling any criticism of David on these grounds? In any case, naming David a “winner” in civil war appears a tenuous argument, the forced installation of a “winner” within the kind of war where, more than any other, nobody wins.

I have treated these two facets of Ps-Hegesippus’ David within the context of his role as *Dominus/Rex* because of the verbs (*triumphauit, uicit*) used to describe David there. We will return to the Bathsheba episode in the section on David as family man. For now, we should notice that the lenses of Bathsheba and civil war unveil David’s potential as *exemplum* not only to address key social and ethical issues, but to do so with a certain electricity. Langlands talks about the “intoxicating effect” that Rome’s culture heroes could have within Roman society: the “transcendent force” that *exempla* could have was powered by the “thrilling” experience that people underwent in hearing about, contemplating, and learning from them.⁵³ Now consider how David is presented as king in the passages discussed so far: He sacks and founds a city, stores gold (apparently), captivates a woman, avoids civil war, and offers himself over to death (but doesn’t die). Ps-Hegesippus hits many of the dramatic high points of David’s legacy, concocting an exciting (even multimedia) persona to stand in the background of Jewish history. King David is a thrill. Of course, Romans were not alone in getting excited over the exploits of their national *exempla*: Christians did the same thing with their culture heroes, for example with the martyrs. But the overall impression of Ps-Hegesippus’ David as we have seen it so far strikes a definite note with Roman exemplarity, not only in its “intoxicating effect” but also in its use of quintessentially Roman themes, such as the falling and founding of cities and the arena of civil war.

The final aspect of David in *De Excidio* to be associated with his role as king is his portrayal as a warrior at 5.19.1. There Ps-Hegesippus plays upon a portion of Josephus’ *Jewish War* (5.460–65) wherein Josephus comments upon a certain son of Antiochus Commagenus and the cohort called “Macedonian,” which he led as they made a bold attempt upon Jerusalem’s walls. The force was repelled with injuries, leading Josephus to aver that “even genuine Macedonians, if they are to conquer, must have Alexander’s fortune (τύχη).”⁵⁴ Writing his own version of the narrative, Ps-Hegesippus expands this discussion to include not only Alexander’s fortune (*euentus*) but also his *alacritas* in war, after which he inserts David as a comparison and foil to Alexander the Great:

⁵³ Langlands 2018, 2–4.

⁵⁴ LCL 210: 148–49.

Thus did daring produce victory and chance turn peril into glory. And even our David, when he fought against giants, while intent on his enemy, had one ready to strike him from behind, but Abishai, the friend of the king, anticipated the one aiming sword-blows [at him]. Truly, chance preserved Alexander, but grace preserved the prophet.

De Excidio 5.19.1⁵⁵

Here Ps-Hegesippus enters into the heart of Roman military discourse, arguing that *temeritas* can produce *uictoria*, and that *euentus* can turn things upside down, can even exchange *periculum* for *gloria*. Bravery, victory, chance, danger, glory – such ideas were the heartbeat of how Roman historians talked about war and the martial virtues for which their culture would become famous. Ps-Hegesippus cannot resist introducing the great warrior-king of Judeo-Christian tradition into the fray. The way in which he does so reveals how, in Ps-Hegesippus' mind, David differed from and surpassed other great kings of the ancient Mediterranean world.

The scene to which Ps-Hegesippus here refers is related in 2 Sam 21:15, part of a sequence of short vignettes in 2 Sam 21:16–22 where the feats of David and his mighty men are on display. There, in fighting with the Philistines, David and his men encounter, and defeat, what the Greek and Latin biblical traditions call “giants” (γίγαντες, *gigantes*). What I find most interesting about Ps-Hegesippus' choice of intertexts here is that he does *not* (and indeed, never does) refer to the much more famous episode (at least in modern times) of David's encounter with Goliath (1 Sam 17). The principle that Ps-Hegesippus wants to illustrate – that David was preserved in battle by (divine) *gratia*, whereas Alexander the Great only remained unscathed in battle by chance (*euentus*) – is just as easy to derive from the David and Goliath story. But just because the David and Goliath story is perhaps the best-known tale associated with King David today does not mean that it enjoyed similar traditionary hegemony in late antiquity; and this seemingly obscure episode involving Abishai from 2 Sam 21 may well have been better known in antiquity than it is today. Whatever the case, Ps-Hegesippus found this latter episode an appropriate embodiment of the divine support that King David enjoyed in battle. Divine *gratia*, not *euentus*, characterized David's career, but this was not true of the Hellenistic world's most famous warrior-king, Alexander.

⁵⁵ CSEL 66.1: 340: *Sic temeritas uictoriam inuenit et euentus periculum in gloriam uertit. Noster quoque David cum pugnaret aduersum gigantes, intentus in hostem a tergo percussorem habebat, sed librantem ictus suos comes regis Abessa praeuenit. Verum Alexandrum euentus seruauit, prophetam gratia.*

This comparative presentation of King David as a warrior-king on a par with Alexander the Great smacks of the Roman historiographical impulse that forms the basis of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. These works pair off some of the most important leaders of the Greco-Roman world, comparing their characters and careers. These pairings are "extremely meaningful," utilizing the formal method of *synkrisis* (comparative assessment) "to express key themes, bringing the *Lives* richer meaning than they achieve in isolation."⁵⁶ The *Lives* are a form of *exempla*-based moral discourse encompassing a breadth of human behavior and constituting a particular comparative form of exemplary reasoning. Ps-Hegesippus' juxtaposition of David and Alexander reflects a similar method and generates related content. Alexander the Great is a standard *comparandum* in Plutarch's *Lives*, appearing constantly as a superior foil to a host of famous leaders. Furthermore, Ps-Hegesippus' theme of comparison, *euentus* ("chance"), resonates strongly with Plutarch's emphasis upon τύχη,⁵⁷ an interest he shares with other Greek historians, significantly Josephus. Here we should mention the tendency of *exempla* to function as a "special kind of ethical resource within a culture," what Langlands dubs a kind of wisdom literature and sees as a complement to "the moral forms of doctrinal philosophy or religion."⁵⁸ *Exempla* of the Roman world tend to address as specialized case studies what we might call theological, philosophical, or religious questions. When Ps-Hegesippus uses King David and Alexander the Great to talk about what he calls *gratia* (divine grace or favor) and *euentus* (fate, luck, or chance), he is capitalizing upon the capacity that *exempla* have to address just such kinds of questions by providing embodied, biographical instances illustrating abstract principles. Ps-Hegesippus uses this discourse to differentiate the "pagan" Hellenistic world from that of the biblical Hebrew-Jewish tradition: While both spheres could claim successful warrior-kings, they were not equal. The heroes of Hebrew antiquity, encapsulated in David, were superior.

An interesting feature of David's presentation in this context is his relationship to Ps-Hegesippus as author. He is called "our David" (*Noster David*). This reads like a subtle hint that Ps-Hegesippus operates from a perspective in which David, a king of Hebrew antiquity and thus proper ancestor to the Jews, is claimed by Christians.⁵⁹ Ps-Hegesippus subtly aligns

⁵⁶ Nevin 2014, 45.

⁵⁷ Stadter 2019.

⁵⁸ Langlands 2018, 47.

⁵⁹ Cf. references to "our Joseph" by Orosius at 1.8.8 (*illius nostri Ioseph*) and 1.8.11 (*Ioseph noster*).

his own Christian identity with the noble world of Hebrew antiquity. In fact, there is no obvious reason why David should otherwise appear at *De Excidio* 5.19.1, which has a script in its source text (Josephus' *Jewish War*) that includes no mention of David. In a discussion on fate and the tides of war citing Alexander the Great, Ps-Hegesippus can hardly help but introduce an ancient "Christian" king from Hebrew antiquity who was similarly successful in battle; in fact, he was even better.

Taken together, the presentations of David in his capacity as (warrior-) king color his overall portrayal in *De Excidio*. David is a figure whose antiquity is tied to the city of Jerusalem and whose kingship is seen as formative in the development of civil leadership in Jewish tradition. His legacy as leader is idealized by emphasizing his selflessness and moderation. David is a mild and giving *dominus* and *rex*. Even in the most unlikely scenarios (such as his affair with Bathsheba, when 2 Sam 11:1 explicitly says he *avoided* going into battle) David was a winner – he “won” (*triumphavit, uicit*). On top of all this, the divine *gratia* that characterized David's rule sets him apart from the wider Greek (pagan) world: He thrived in battle as someone blessed by God, not someone who happened to get lucky, like Alexander the Great. In addition to everything else, David was a warrior-king. On the whole, David appears as an ideal king on several fronts; never once is his status as protagonist mitigated. He performs a didactic function for Ps-Hegesippus, addressing leadership, affairs of state, and the arts of love and war.⁶⁰ As we will see, David's legacy in *De Excidio* also extends into the spheres of prophecy, art, erudition, and family life.

PROPHETA: KING DAVID AS PSALMIST AND PROPHET IN *DE EXCIDIO*

David is not just a king in *De Excidio*; he is also a prophet. The biblical world that created King David's legacy allows for overlap between the distinct roles of prophet and king.⁶¹ Nor was such a mixture peculiar to the Judeo-Christian tradition:⁶² Monarchs of the wider Greco-Roman milieu were often expected both to patronize prophesy and sometimes to don the mantle themselves. The Roman Emperors Trajan, Hadrian, and Julian, for example, were all dubbed (honorary) prophets at Didyma.⁶³ David's identification as

⁶⁰ Petitfils 2016 on Jews/Christians “naturalizing” Roman leadership (3).

⁶¹ See 1 Sam 10:10–12, 19:20–24; Philo *Ebr.* 143.

⁶² Consult Aune 1983; Kelly 2018.

⁶³ Fontenrose 1988, 51.

propheta throughout *De Excidio*, therefore, renders his character legible in both Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman terms. Further, for Ps-Hegesippus, David's prophetic identity is inextricably intertwined with his role as poet-psalmist-musician. Ps-Hegesippus situates David qua prophet within a complex of associations that allows him to bring considerable creativity to bear in framing Jewish history in terms of this Hebrew hero.

David's first and only prophetic appearance in Book 1 of *De Excidio* is arguably his most thematically significant appearance in the work. At 1.16, Ps-Hegesippus is narrating Pompey's impending entrance into Jerusalem (63 BCE), with John Hyrcanus and Aristobulus fighting over whether or not this will be allowed to happen (cf. Josephus *War* 1.143–44; *Ant.* 14.59). Once Pompey succeeds in entering into Jerusalem, even into the inner reaches of the Temple – something indisputably illicit for any Gentile to do – Ps-Hegesippus begins a kind of lament:

And so the Roman army was received into the city, and the Jews with their own hands opened the gates to those who would not long afterwards conquer the city and temple, and this saying of David was fulfilled: "God, Gentiles have come into your inheritance, they have polluted your holy Temple." Accordingly, they willingly surrendered their royal residence, they left their palaces.

De Excidio 1.16.3⁶⁴

Ps-Hegesippus interprets Ps 79:1a (LXX 78:1a), which he calls a "Davidism" (*Dauidicum*),⁶⁵ as a prophetic prediction of Jerusalem's and the Temple's profanation by Gentiles.⁶⁶ In so doing, Ps-Hegesippus joins the ranks of other interpreters who had applied this psalm's predictions to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and subsequent similar events.⁶⁷ Psalm 79 presented a prophecy "anschlussfähig für viele Situationen,"⁶⁸ a versatility that led interpreters like the author of 1 Maccabees,⁶⁹ Eusebius,⁷⁰ and Ambrose⁷¹ to retrofit the psalm to various

⁶⁴ CSEL 66.1: 25.

⁶⁵ An idiomatic Christian way to say "saying of David" in shorthand Latin in the late fourth century; see Ambrose *Hexaameron libri sex* 1.9.33; *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII* 2.17; Jerome *Ep.* 46.11.

⁶⁶ See briefly Estève 1987, 470.

⁶⁷ See Bay 2021e, 7–9.

⁶⁸ Schnocks 2010, 153.

⁶⁹ 1 Macc 7:16–17 interprets Ps 79:2–3 to refer to the slaughtering of sixty righteous Jews by Bacchides and Alcimus, two envoys of the King Demetrius, and may in fact imply that Alcimus is the author of Ps 79.

⁷⁰ Eusebius *Demonstratio Evangelica* 10.1.4–12 applies both Ps 79 (=78) and 74 (=73) to the Babylonian destruction and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE.

⁷¹ Ambrose *Ep.* 20.20 quotes Ps 79:1a in the verbatim language of *De Excidio* 1.16.3 as having predicted the Gothic siege of a basilica that occurred in his own time.

historical situations.⁷² The psalm was a blank check that could be cashed in to limn any historical desolation of Jerusalem as “foretold”; it also provided a canonical template for lament.

Ps-Hegesippus does not restrict his application of Ps 79 to Pompey’s sacking of Jerusalem in 63 BCE. What, after all, is the primary focus of his narrative? It is the monumental destruction of Jerusalem effected by the Romans 133 years later in 70 CE. Thus, at *De Excidio* 5.2, we again find Ps 79 (this time 79:1–3) fitted as prophetic commentary:

[the Jews] were to see a fortress within the Temple, war upon the threshold, death among the altars, so as to see with their own eyes things which they had not believed were to occur as the prophets had forebode. But had not David said of these things: “they have polluted your holy Temple, they have set out the bodies of your servants as meals for the birds of heaven, they have poured out their blood like water in a circuit around Jerusalem and there was no one who might bury them?” Yet now, at the same time, Gentiles have also entered into the inheritance of God, who bore away everything, and the Temple has been polluted by their corpses and the cadavers of the slain lie unburied as a meal for the birds, for the appetite of beasts.

De Excidio 5.2.173

De Excidio 5.2, the narrator’s own second-person address lamenting, describing, and explaining the final destruction of Jerusalem, is arguably the most important chapter in the work for comprehending Ps-Hegesippus’ interpretation of Jerusalem’s destruction (as divine vengeance for the Jews’ rejection and killing of Jesus).⁷⁴ This makes the lengthy citation of Ps 79:1–3 in that text, with constituent verses slightly rearranged,⁷⁵ all the more significant. Ps 79 was a hermeneutical touchstone for how Ps-Hegesippus understood Jerusalem’s destruction, and David a prophetic predecessor to Ps-Hegesippus himself: Both (fore) saw Jerusalem’s profanation by Gentiles. Ps-Hegesippus, also a kind of prophet,⁷⁶ resembles the Hebrew heroes of his narrative.

⁷² Cf. Hilary of Poitiers *Tractatus super psalmos* 136.1, which uses Ps 79 and 137 to explain Jerusalem’s destruction under Babylon.

⁷³ CSEL 66.1: 300.

⁷⁴ Bay 2018.

⁷⁵ Bay 2021e, 22–25.

⁷⁶ At *De Excidio* Prol. 1, Ps-Hegesippus claims to have written the *res gestae Macchabaeorum* “prophetically” (*propheticus*). See Somenzi 2009, 165–66, and Morin 1914–1919a. Such an idea could connote a predication/fulfillment paradigm. In any case, Ps-Hegesippus positions himself among the “prophets” who comprise part of the Hebrew *exempla* in his narrative; cf. 2.12.1; 4.17.1; 5.2.1; 5.16.1; 5.32.1. The converse of this group of “truth-tellers” is represented by the Egyptian *pseudopropheta* of *De Excidio* 2.7.1, who claims to proclaim heavenly oracles by the prophetic spirit (*iactabat se prophetico spiritu caelestia adnuntiare oracula*), something that David did in actuality, not in pretense (3.16.1).

By describing the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 CE as having occurred “as the prophets forebode” (*prophetis denuntiantibus*) – though the Jews did not believe this (*non credidissent*) – Ps-Hegesippus clues the reader to the fact that he sees these events as having been predicted, not by a single prophet (David), but by numerous prophets (the prophets as a class). For a late antique Christian author, this is nothing radical (nor was it for Josephus: see *Jewish War* 6.109–12). But it is helpful to note that a subgroup of the Hebrew heroes who appear in *De Excidio* serve the express purpose of “proving” that the events of 70 CE were an inevitability. The world of Hebrew *exempla* is an interpretive key to the Jewish world that constitutes *De Excidio*’s first-century present. And one need not be a prophet to guess what other prophetic figures Ps-Hegesippus taps in this regard. Like David, Daniel foresaw the predicament of 70 CE,⁷⁷ as Ps-Hegesippus has Josephus state in a speech made to the Jewish rebel John at *De Excidio* 5.31:

When he was unable to turn him aside, he said: “No wonder, John, if you are persisting straight on to the destruction of the country, since divine protections have already relinquished it. But I marvel that you believe that it is not going to perish, since you have read the prophetic books, in which the destructions of the country were foretold to us as was the fact that the repaired houses were to be destroyed again, by the Roman army. For what else did Daniel proclaim? For he prophesied not about what had already been done but of what was to come. What is the ‘abomination of desolation,’ which was loudly proclaimed to be effected by the arrival of the Romans, if not that which is now impending? What is that oracle, which has often been remembered by us and which was threatened by almighty God, since now the city is to perish from its very foundations, when by the hands of its citizens, who are of the same tribe, its extinction has come, if not that which we now see to be fulfilled? But because now it has not been agreeable to defend a temple which has been stained by forbidden blood, perhaps it will be agreeable for it to be purged by fire.”

De Excidio 5.31.2⁷⁸

David and Daniel both belong to the *prophetae* who, for Ps-Hegesippus, make sense of Jerusalem’s destruction. What this means for present purposes is that David, while a uniquely important figure for Ps-Hegesippus, belongs to several classes of *exempla* that emerge from the narrative.

⁷⁷ That Daniel belongs to the “Hebrew” past may be inferred from the mention of his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (i.e., Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael), famous for their surviving the “fiery furnace” in Dan 3 (cf. 1:6, 7, 11, 19; 2:17). Titus calls these three *Hebraei pueri* (*De Excidio* 5.46.1), and Daniel would presumably have been similarly described.

⁷⁸ CSEL 66.1: 372–73. Cf. Josephus *Ant.* 1.70.

Just as David is a *dominus* and/or *rex* like Saul, Solomon, Amaziah, Zedekiah, and Hezekiah, all of whom are, like David, mentioned in *De Excidio* 5.16 (see [Chapter 9](#)), so also David is a *propheta* like Daniel, Elisha ([Chapter 7](#)), and Jeremiah and Isaiah ([Chapter 9](#)). However, David is the only *Hebraeus* who does double duty as both prophet and king. David is unique.

Returning to Ps 79: David's association with this prophetic text in *De Excidio* has several interesting features. As already noted, Ps-Hegesippus uses this psalm to interpret multiple historical episodes: Pompey's entry into Jerusalem and its Temple in 63 BCE and the Romans' destruction thereof in 70 CE. Ps-Hegesippus also articulates a rather creative rendition of this psalm in *De Excidio* 5.2.1, switching clauses and verses around within Ps 79:1–3 and contextualizing this within a discussion of his own words. Perhaps most striking is the fact that Ps-Hegesippus associates Ps 79 with David at all. The bulk of the biblical tradition attributes this psalm to Asaph (comprising along with Ps 50 and 73–78 the “Psalms of Asaph”), as Eusebius recognized.⁷⁹ Yet a small pocket of the Greek tradition credits David with Ps 79: The red-ink heading in Codex Sinaiticus names David as that Psalm's author, and a correcting hand at 1 Macc 7:16 in the same codex may insinuate David as well.⁸⁰ Codex Sinaiticus was produced in the decades just before *De Excidio* was written.⁸¹ Is Ps-Hegesippus cognizant of or dependent on Codex Sinaiticus, or a tradition related to it? While we cannot answer this question, it seems unlikely that Ps-Hegesippus would have fabricated David's association with Ps 79. More likely he knew of a tradition – perhaps the only one

⁷⁹ Eusebius *Demonstratio Evangelica* 10.1.4–12 attributes both Ps 79/78 and 74/73 to Asaph; Ambrose *Ep.* 20.20 cites Ps 79:1a, but not until slightly later (20.21) does he insert the same fulfillment formula found in *De Excidio* 1.16.3: *completum est illud quod ... David propheta cecinit*, there a reference (apparently) to Ps 76:3, though it may be intended to reflect on Ps 79 as well. Ps-Hegesippus and Ambrose may share an understanding of Ps 79 as Davidic.

⁸⁰ Codex Sinaiticus (S) 109b (quire 61, fol. 6v) heads Ps 79: ΨΑΛΜΟCΤΩΔΑΥΙΔ; 23b (quire 40, fol. 2r) contains, in a smaller correcting hand in the margin at 1 Macc 7:16: ΟΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ, probably an allusion to David, though potentially an allusion to Asaph. Ms *Parisinus Graecus* 3 (Göttingen = 56), i.e., BnF gr. 3 (saec. 1093), reads at 1 Macc 7:16 τοὺς λόγους οὓς ἐγράψεν δαδ, uniquely attributing Ps 79 to David in the Greek manuscript tradition (so far as I can tell); this manuscript is known for peculiar variants and glosses: [Fincati 2016](#). At the end of the day, to credit a psalm to David as opposed to Asaph constitutes a minor distinction: Asaph was a court musician of David, his patron: 1 Chr 15:17, 19; 16:5, 7, 37; 25:1–2, 6, 9. Both could reasonably lay claim to a commissioned psalm.

⁸¹ Metzger and Ehrman 2005, 62; Aland and Aland 1989, 106.

he knew – in which this was considered a Davidic psalm. Or perhaps Ps-Hegesippus subscribed to the apparently popular strain of Christian interpretation, evinced by authors like Origen, Hilary of Poitiers, and Eusebius, that David was the author of all the psalms.⁸² In any case, the attribution of Ps 79 to David adds a layer of texture to his overall presentation as prophet.

David's prediction in Ps 79 about the entrance into and destruction of Jerusalem by Gentiles is perhaps his most thematically significant function within *De Excidio*: It infuses his prophetic voice into the very life-pulse of the work. But this is not the only prophetic claim of David recounted in *De Excidio*. He also dons the garb of prophet in *De Excidio* 3.16.1, where Josephus' Jewish countrymen at Jotapata attempt to persuade him that death by any means is better than capitulation to the Romans (see Chapter 8). Ps-Hegesippus has these Jewish patriots cite the suicide of Saul as an instance of sacrifice on behalf of country, an argument in which they enlist David as a prophetic confirmation of Saul's exemplary death:

Because his armor-bearer was terrified, he [Saul] transfixed himself on this sword, in a manner worthy of one whom David would vindicate by the prophetic spirit—because a man of Amalekite race had boasted falsely about his death and thought to diminish the glory of a man who had removed himself from the foreigner [or enemy], so that he falsely claimed that Saul had been killed by him—nevertheless he was worthy whom the prophet had so praised, saying: “Saul and Jonathan, most beautiful and beloved of all, they were inseparable in their life and were not separated in death, they were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.” And David himself, when he saw the people struck by the angel, willed that the heavenly vengeance be turned toward himself, lest he be saved while the people perished.

De Excidio 3.16.1⁸³

David is identified as someone who “vindicated” (*uindicaret*; cf. 1.44.8) Saul by the spirit of prophecy (*spiritu prophetico*).⁸⁴ Ps-Hegesippus' speakers seem to mean that David's praise of Saul post mortem acquits him of the false charge of having been killed by an Amalekite.⁸⁵ David's vindication of Saul is further underlined by his having praised (*laudaret*) Saul and Jonathan in the lament he sings over them in 1 Sam 1:23;

⁸² Whealey 1996, 239–40.

⁸³ CSEL 66.1: 211. Cf. Ambrose *Off.* 3.61; Somenzi 2009, 75.

⁸⁴ Cf. the Egyptian pseudo-prophet at *De Excidio* 2.7.1; Bay 2021a.

⁸⁵ The biblical episode is convoluted – 1 Sam 31:4//1 Chr 10:4; 2 Sam 1:10 – and is complicated by Josephus' *Ant.* 6.371–72, 7.1–6; see Begg 1999 and Avioz 2015, 172ff.

while this melody is conspicuously absent in Josephus' account of the aftermath of Saul's and Jonathan's deaths (*Jewish Antiquities* 7.6),⁸⁶ Ps-Hegesippus records the song in verbiage that displays his own ingenuity.⁸⁷

David, the Hebrew prophet, could be legitimately used to interpret and make arguments about the Hebrew past, not only by Ps-Hegesippus but by first-century Jewish soldiers as imagined by Ps-Hegesippus. David's prophetic persona is also linked to his poetry and music. For this reason we should mention *De Excidio* 5.2.1, cited earlier. There Ps-Hegesippus summons David as a master of the *cithara*, with which he was in the habit (*solitus*) of driving out the "oppressive spirit" (*exasperans spiritus*), presumably the "evil spirit" that used to fall upon Saul according to 1 Samuel (16:18–23; 18:10; 19:9). This soothing capacity of David's music-making, characterized by *suavitas*, parallels that of David's psalms. At the beginning of 5.2.1, where David is later identified explicitly as a prophet, Ps-Hegesippus shows how David's poetry and music cultivated peace. This contrasts sharply with the *furor* ("fury," "rage") characteristic of the Jews who instigated Rome to attack and thus participated in Jerusalem's downfall (see [Chapter 4](#)). The Hebrew legacy of the poet-prophet-musician David is a far cry from the Jewish reality of *De Excidio*'s narrative. We will have occasion to return once more to this contrast before the end of this chapter.

David surfaces as prophet again at *De Excidio* 5.9.4, a striking passage where Ps-Hegesippus reinterprets Josephus' *ekphrasis* of the Jerusalem Temple (*War* 5.136–247) in Christian theological terms. He turns what is in Josephus a decidedly Jewish space into a place indicative of Christian identity and truth. David plays a central if enigmatic part in this redescription when it comes to the implements inside the Temple's "holy place":

Within there was a censer, within there was a table, within there was a lamp: the censer, because the speech of the High Priest in the same way wafted up to God the Father, like incense; the table, because on it is the passion of Christ and the mysteries of the sacraments—whence also David said "You have prepared a table in my presence"—and whose twelve loaves of bread are like the twelve apostles, witnesses of his passion and resurrection; the lamp, which was placed above the lampstand, which had previously been under a bushel (that is, under the standard of the Law), is now a constant light shining forth by the seven-blend fullness of

⁸⁶ Josephus states only that David "also composed laments and eulogies for the funeral of Saul and Jonathan, which have survived to my own time" (LCL 281: 4–5).

⁸⁷ See [Bay 2021c](#), 16–18.

his grace, because with it the Holy Spirit illuminates the Temple of God with the seven virtues of the greatest graces.

De Excidio 5.9.4⁸⁸

This passage comes very close to associating David with his messianic role within Christian thought as a type of Christ. But it does not do so, at least not clearly. Instead, David's words in the famous shepherd psalm, Psalm 23, are repeated as a statement obliquely related to the "presence" of the *passio Christi* and the sacrament that it was seen to have instituted (the Eucharist), present within the Jerusalem Temple's table of shewbread.⁸⁹ At the least, I think we can safely assume that this Davidic psalm prophetically interprets the table of shewbread as an object whose full significance is revealed in the suffering of Christ, performatively remembered in the ritual meal of the Eucharist (i.e., the *mysteria sacramentorum*).⁹⁰ This fits with what we have already seen of Ps-Hegesippus' treatment of David as prophet: His words carry correct interpretation and accurately predict things to come. David's psalms provide a prophetic roadmap for understanding divinely ordained history and structures. David is a *propheta*, and his word is truth.⁹¹

The last two references to David's prophetic capacities in *De Excidio* tie the present section to the previous one, where we examined David as king, and the following, where we approach David as a family man. At *De Excidio* 5.19.1, discussed in the last section, David is compared to Alexander the Great and thus evokes a great warrior-king of old, allowing the Hebrew-Christian tradition to rival its pagan competition. At the same time, the maxim with which Ps-Hegesippus ends this episode – *Verum Alexandrum euentus seruauit, prophetam gratia* – identifies David not as *dominus* or *rex*, but as *propheta*. This label acts as another marker further distinguishing David (and the biblical world he represents) from Alexander (and the classical world he represents). Even though Greco-Roman prophetic traditions constitute an important backdrop for appreciating ancient Christian prophecy, for Ps-Hegesippus David shows that the Judeo-Christian tradition rivals the Greco-Roman: David is superior

⁸⁸ CSEL 66.1: 311.

⁸⁹ Special bread perennially in the Tabernacle's/Temple's "holy place," sitting literally "before the face" of God.

⁹⁰ This is not the only place at which David is associated with *mysteria*; see 5.16.1 (discussed above and below).

⁹¹ At *De Excidio* 5.9.4 David "said" (*dicit*); at 3.16.1 his prophetic role is characterized by "saying/speaking" (*dicens*). The verbal nature of his tradition is also implicit at 1.16.3 and 5.2.1.

to Alexander the Great as a king protected not by *euentus*, but by *gratia*, and also because he, unlike the Macedonian, merited the title *propheta*.

At *De Excidio* 5.16.1, where Ps-Hegesippus mentions the David and Bathsheba affair (see earlier), David is said to have been united with Bathsheba as his wife “through the prophetic mysteries” (*suo coniugio propheticiis mysteriis copulauisset*).⁹² Bathsheba’s name is etymologized as “daughter of the Sabbath” (*filia Sabbati*). Given the predictive function of David’s other prophetic utterances cited within *De Excidio*, and given the broader tendency of many ancient Christians to read biblical events as symbolic or allegorical or “mystical,” it seems likely that by this Ps-Hegesippus means to convey that David’s marriage to Bathsheba was an event whose real import lay not in the historical event itself, but in what it communicated about what was to be in the future and/or on a different plane of reality. What that means is not particularly clear, though we know that certain of Ps-Hegesippus’ late antique peers were able to present the Bathsheba affair in positive terms by means of a Christological reading. The *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum* states that David prefigured (*imago fuit*) Christ and prophetically predicted (*prophetatio fuit*) him even in this infamous affair: “even in his worst sin lay the mystery of Christ and the church” (*in ipso etiam peccato suo Christi et Ecclesiae mysterium fuit*).⁹³ By this reading, David’s affair with Bathsheba is fundamentally important for the cosmic, metahistorical reality it represents: the union of Christ (“David”) with the church (“Bathsheba”), even while the latter is wed to someone else (“the world,” or the devil).⁹⁴ By such an interpretation – a nonhistorical reading unusual in *De Excidio* – David’s prophetic identity extends to and even redeems the darkest hour of his career.

David’s career within *De Excidio* leans heavily toward his prophetic identity. As prophet-poet-psalmist-musician, Ps-Hegesippus’ David stands predominantly as an inspired voice that explains and interprets historical reality. His hermeneutical power comes both from his words (e.g., his psalms) and his deeds (e.g., his union with Bathsheba). But Ps-Hegesippus’ reading of David requires in the first place the radical decontextualization of those words and actions from their initial contexts. And this is how exemplarity works: The “shearing away” of “the historical conditions that produced [an *exemplum*] in the first place” is *what it is* to use (and thus create) an *exemplum* “stylistically and

⁹² *prophetica mysteria* here is a *hapax legomenon*; cf. *sacra mysteria* in the sordid affair of Paulina at *De Excidio* 2.7.

⁹³ PG 56: 620; trans. Simonneti 2001, 8 (adapted).

⁹⁴ See Bay 2021e, 30–36.

semantically speaking”;⁹⁵ this is also what it means to interpret a text allegorically or symbolically. The line between allegorical interpretation and exemplarity is at times paper thin: Both involve decontextualization, essentialization, and creative reapplication. David as *propheta* embodies a polyvalent interpretive key and as such instantiates the value of providing contextualized understanding in historical thinking. He is also, viewed from another angle, a one-sided character in *De Excidio*, a “good guy” lacking any of the rough edges with which he is portrayed in the biblical narrative. In either case, David as prophet stands for conveying truth.

VIR, PATER: KING DAVID AS FATHER
AND HUSBAND IN *DE EXCIDIO*

Citing David’s humanity is one way to mitigate his memorialization as a culture hero against the biblical backdrop of a legacy sprinkled with unsavory events. David was only human, after all. Many such events occurred in the home. The Bathsheba episode points to the fact that David was remembered not only as a warrior-king and poet-prophet-musician, but also as a son (and son-in-law), brother, father, husband. David appears within several such roles in *De Excidio*.

The David–Bathsheba episode mentioned at *De Excidio* 5.16.1 clearly portrays David as a husband when it says that he united with Bathsheba as his wife in marriage (*suo coniugio ... copulauisset*). Ps-Hegesippus does not expatiate upon David’s virtues here. But this reference to a woman who would become David’s seventh and last wife – after he learned that he had impregnated her and then had her husband killed – belies an incidental cover-up of David’s colorful domestic life according to the Bible.⁹⁶ Recall again the decontextualized nature of *exempla*. In Joy Connolly’s words: “*exempla* constitute an ideologically motivated rhetorical strategy that inscribes highly selective memories into the past.” *Exempla* “facilitate a controlled (mis)reading of the ... past.”⁹⁷

Ps-Hegesippus not only omits all context for the mention of David and Bathsheba story, but presents the union as David “triumphing” (*triumphauit*). The biblically literate reader cannot help but see in this

⁹⁵ Connolly 2001.

⁹⁶ 1 Chr 3 lists David’s wives: Ahinoam the Jezreelite, Abigail the Carmelite, Maacah of Geshur, Haggith, Abital, Eglah, and finally Bathsheba.

⁹⁷ Connolly 2001, 355.

a misreading of the past. In many ways the story of how David met Bathsheba is the ultimate case of failure. David happened to see from his palace a naked Bathsheba bathing on her rooftop. But when did this happen? As the authors of 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles take care to clarify, “David remained at Jerusalem” when his generals and army went to war.⁹⁸ David, the mighty warrior-king, stayed home? After espying the nude beauty, David inquired. Then, *after having learned that she was the wife of one of his soldiers*, he sent messengers to fetch her for sex (2 Sam 11:3–4). This was no tryst, but a liaison known within the royal household. It was no accident, but a lustful affair. Later, when Bathsheba sent word to David that she was pregnant (11:5), he tried to conceal his crime by recalling Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah the Hittite, from war and encouraging him to sleep with his wife while on furlough (11:6–10). The plan failed: Uriah was too noble. It failed again when David tried a second time by getting Uriah drunk (11:11–13). So David adopted a new course of action: He arranged for Uriah’s death in battle, commanding his general Joab to place Uriah where casualties were heaviest (11:14–17). This plan worked. Uriah died, and David quickly stepped into his shoes; Bathsheba the mourning widow gave way to Bathsheba the wife of David (11:26–27).

That David’s beginnings with Bathsheba were illicit is no secret. The affair would become one of the most famous dalliances in the Western world. Nor could readers of the Bible ignore David’s guilt for his serial crime. 2 Sam 11 ends with the evaluative statement: “But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD” (11:27b). God rebukes David outright through the mouth of the prophet Nathan (2 Sam 12), resulting in David’s confession (2 Sam 12:13; Ps 51) and the death of the infant son Bathsheba bore, punishment for David’s deed (2 Sam 12:14–23). As already mentioned, the afterlife of David’s penitence for this became a defining feature of his persona: David, the “man after God’s own heart” (1 Sam 13:14), is remembered for a piety deeply formed by his willingness to confess and repent of his mistakes. Conventionally, ancient Christians did not hide David’s wrongdoing – Bathsheba appears in the genealogy of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew as “she who had been the wife of Uriah” (Matt 1:6b) – but found ways to redeem him.

Ps-Hegesippus, on the other hand, does not redeem David. He doesn’t need to. The David of *De Excidio* 5.16.1 is a thoroughly positive figure

⁹⁸ 2 Sam 11:1; 1 Chr 20:1.

whose errors do not exist. His famous faults are never identified as such. David is briefly depicted as a husband in *De Excidio*, but this role is never qualified. If one were to take Ps-Hegesippus' word for it, David would appear a highly successful husband, one whose marital union is able to communicate deep truths via the "prophetic mysteries." David as husband thus illustrates not only the radical capacity of *exempla* to eschew their traditional narrative contexts, but also their ability "to be reinterpreted and redeployed ... and to acquire new meanings over time." Inasmuch as Ps-Hegesippus' presentation of David and Bathsheba constitutes an unusual (though not unknown) contribution to Davidic tradition, David exhibits a "co-existence of pointedness and flexibility (consensus and indeterminacy)" of the kind that Langlands identifies as producing "the productive tension that powers exemplarity."⁹⁹ Taking *De Excidio* on its own, David is neither uncomplicated nor indeterminate: He is a figure who effected a successful union with Bathsheba. *De Excidio*'s portrayal of David as family man is flat; but read against the larger tradition, it appears dynamic and even agonistic. In view of his broader legacy, David as husband in *De Excidio* illustrates the ability of exemplary discourse to depart from traditional moorings, to transform *exempla* against the grain.

Just as jarring is the depiction of David as a father in *De Excidio* 1.44.8.¹⁰⁰ There, appropriately, David's relationship with his son Absalom is recalled within an account of the intrigues of King Herod's household. The chapter records a speech by Herod's eldest son Antipater after being accused of killing his brothers Alexander and Aristobulus. Antipater philosophizes about parricide, judgment, and acquittal citing two duos – Dathan/Abiram and David/Absalom:

The earth swallowed Dathan and Abiram in its maw, yet even they had not attacked the father who gave them life. The earth suspended the fleeing Absalom by the branch of a tree, lest he reach his father who, if he had reached him, would have evaded him. But I have come to you and am as of yet in danger. David vindicated his would-be murderer, because he was not able to save him, but I do not seek to be vindicated by enemies and accusers, so that I may summon them to tortures.

De Excidio 1.44.8¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Langlands 2018, 62, 142–43.

¹⁰⁰ Solomon is identified as David's heir (*heres*) at *De Excidio* 5.9.1, but never explicitly as his son.

¹⁰¹ CSEL 66.1: 120. Cf. Josephus *War* 1.575–636.

Dathan and Abiram, alongside Absalom, are here made to facilitate correct, mutually informative interpretation. All three characters are presented as having been judged by the earth (*terra*);¹⁰² nature itself recognizes and judges wrongdoing. The presence of Dathan and Abiram highlights the particular heinousness of parricide: The earth swallowed them even though they had not attacked their biological father (*genitalis pater*); how much more a father-slayer (*parricida*) like Absalom? But this recollection of Absalom's rebellion against David (2 Sam 15–18) omits important details (some of them sordid), presenting an incomplete picture of this story. We must recognize these absences to appreciate fully how *De Excidio* bends Absalom's legacy.

Absalom's problems with his father did not materialize out of thin air. One of a number of children of the king by a series of wives and concubines, Absalom had a biological sister named Tamar (2 Sam 13:1). Another son of David's named Amnon developed such an ardent lust for Tamar that he conspired with another relative (David's nephew Jonadab) to lure her into vulnerable circumstances (13:2–13), after which he violently raped her (13:14). Adding insult to injury, Amnon then had Tamar forcefully removed from his room (13:15–18). David's response to this was to become "very angry" (13:21), yet he did nothing about it.¹⁰³ This was not good enough for Absalom. Hating Amnon (13:22), he eventually arranged to kill him as requital for having violated his sister (13:24–33). After this murder, Absalom fled and spent years on the lam before being recalled to Jerusalem (2 Sam 14:21–23). Yet even after he returned, by David's command Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years without ever seeing the king's face (14:24–28), only afterward by much connivance and effort earning David's apparent forgiveness (14:29–33). Only then did Absalom begin to accrue popular support and power (2 Sam 15:1ff), which quickly led to David being chased out of Jerusalem (15:13ff). The king, forced to flee his own city, entered into war against his own son, which would end in the young man's tragic death. As with all family disputes, there was a long history precipitating this state of affairs.

All of this background is completely absent in *De Excidio* 1.44.8. There, Absalom is simply judged and summarily executed as an attempted parricide who had unsuccessfully pursued his father (*pater*). This allows the focus to shift to David as the merciful hero of the story. Antipater

¹⁰² See Bay 2021e, 10–12.

¹⁰³ Other fathers respond inadequately to children's misbehavior, e.g., Jacob (Gen 34); Eli (1 Sam 3:13); cf. 1 Kgs 1.

remembers that David was unable to save (*seruare*) his son Absalom, who was killed in battle, but that he did “vindicate” him (*uindicauit*; cf. 3.16.1), apparently referring to David’s pronounced mourning for Absalom after his death (2 Sam 18:33; 19:4), which can be read as a kind of post-mortem exoneration of the young rebel. David thus appears as an unusually gracious father, who only failed to save his son’s life because he was not able to do so (*quia seruare non potuit*) and who “vindicated” him nevertheless. David is victim and vindicator, Absalom merely a criminal. As with the Bathsheba episode, Ps-Hegesippus white-washes and streamlines his David.

Another thing that David at *De Excidio* 1.44.8 illustrates is the special capacity for *exempla* to figure in argument. The speeches in *De Excidio*, as in ancient historiography more generally, routinely depict this feature of exemplary discourse.¹⁰⁴ At 1.44.8, King David and Prince Absalom constitute a particularly appropriate exemplary pair because the speaker (Antipater) is a young prince speaking to his father, King Herod. Moreover, Antipater speaks as one accused of parricide. He was in the same position as the biblical Absalom. This brings out the clear application that David’s example should have for his correlate in this construction, Herod: Just like the ancient king forgave his son and even tried to save him, so too should Herod. Indeed, Antipater argues that he stands in an even better position than Absalom because, unlike the latter, who sought to make his way through to his father (to kill him), Antipater voluntarily came to Herod: *ego ad te ueni*. The David–Absalom *exemplum* maps readily onto the Herodian household drama; its appearance in Antipater’s speech is unsurprising. What paradigm could have been more apt? But what is so interesting about this appropriate use of role models is the backdrop. In *De Excidio*, as in Josephus’ *Jewish War*, the intrigue, murder, and general villainy that obtained within Herod the Great’s domestic sphere are presented in detail. This is overt, obvious, and thus unavoidable context for evaluating the behavior of various historical actors. But in the *exempla* Antipater cites in his speech, the background is completely hidden. David’s household affairs were just as messy as Herod’s,¹⁰⁵ yet the reader is not invited to recall this. It is as if it did not matter; and indeed, it does not once we remember the selectivity of exemplarity.

¹⁰⁴ See Marincola 2010 and Chapters 8 and 9 in the present work.

¹⁰⁵ Two of the most successful kings of Jewish tradition, David and Herod, both had broken family and home lives.

As an “*exemplum* in action” within the speech at *De Excidio* 1.44.8, David as father illustrates once again the radically reconstructive capabilities of *exempla*. He appears as a father ready to save his own *parricida* and, if not, one willing at least to vindicate him. David evinces a mercy doubly powerful within a Roman world where parricide had an especially poignant valence as something irrevocably impious, immoral, and evil.¹⁰⁶

Our reading of David as family man takes the broad tradition into account. On its own, *De Excidio*’s David appears as a gracious father and a noble husband. But Ps-Hegesippus is inserting himself into a larger tradition, where different perspectives on biblical figures dwell. When read against that wider backdrop, which Ps-Hegesippus himself does not suggest, we see a different picture of David. Nor does *De Excidio* propose other ways of understanding David, or even that these exist in the traditionary ether. But they do. Hiding such foibles was something Seneca specifically prescribed for dealing with *exempla*.¹⁰⁷ Still, we today can view *De Excidio*’s portrayal of David against and at odds with other, darker strains of tradition.

As father and husband in *De Excidio*, just as in every other role he occupies, David is a heroic, noble, positive character. He is protagonist par excellence. Yet, measured against his biblical career, Ps-Hegesippus’ David reveals the subjectivity of exemplary discourse. David is an unqualified hero in *De Excidio* because, for Ps-Hegesippus, that is who David is. Still, as the untold stories of David’s household suggest, David’s portrait as a poster dad and trophy husband betrays the bendability of *exempla* rather than proffering a balanced assessment of his life.

THE CHRISTIAN DAVID AND PSEUDO-HEGESIPPUS

The David found in *De Excidio* is not foreign to ancient Christian literature. Like Ps-Hegesippus, other late antique Christian authors

¹⁰⁶ Biscotti 2018; Robinson 2007, 30ff, esp. 44–47: “[t]he penalty for parricide ... was to be sewn into a sack and thrown into running water,” with the sack at times containing a snake, ape, dog, or cock (169). Constantine insisted upon this penalty (Theodosian Code 9.15.1; Justinian *Institutes* 4.18.6).

¹⁰⁷ Seneca *Ep.* 120.5: “Many flaws underlay these exempla, which the surface and splendour of the particular conspicuous deed concealed; we ignored them. Nature orders praiseworthy things to be exaggerated; there is no one who has not gone beyond the truth in their praise of glory.” Langlands 2018, 104, also 108.

portray David as symbol of Jerusalem,¹⁰⁸ prophet-psalmist,¹⁰⁹ father,¹¹⁰ leader/king, musician/exorcist,¹¹¹ warrior,¹¹² and husband. They even used the same biblical episodes tapped by Ps-Hegesippus to do so. What singles Ps-Hegesippus out are the things he omits completely. For example, while Ps-Hegesippus mentions the major stains on David's record – the Bathsheba episode, the census, domestic strife – these never appear as problems. Other early Christian authors routinely use the Bathsheba kerfuffle or the census debacle to mark points of failure in David's reign, usually with a view to illustrating the pious king's penitence.¹¹³ Such narrativizations of sin that end up exposing piety have no place within Ps-Hegesippus' historical outlook. And this has everything to do with the psalms that Ps-Hegesippus does and does not cite. While he enlists Psalms 23 and 79, texts that explain the Temple layout and predict Jerusalem's downfall, respectively, the only time Ps-Hegesippus cites one of the many Davidic psalms expressing weakness, failure, need, repentance – in this case Psalm 142 (141) – he does not name David as its author, but refers to him simply as “another saint” (*alius sanctus*), alongside Job (*De Excidio* 3.17.1).¹¹⁴

While it is not exceptional for a Christian author only to cite a few select psalms, it is no accident that Ps-Hegesippus never cites those psalms famous for highlighting Davidic failure, even when they are directly connected to certain episodes he mentions, for example Psalms 32 and/or 51 (correlated to the Bathsheba episode; *De Excidio* 5.16.1)¹¹⁵ or Psalm 3

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Prudentius (*Psychomachia* 805–14), but with a Christianizing interpretation: Mastrangelo 2008, 111.

¹⁰⁹ See Hilary of Poitiers *Tractatus super psalmos*, exactly as at p. 203 n 72 5 and, generally, Daley and Kolbet 2015.

¹¹⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus *Poem* 2.1.19.2–5 uses the Absalom episode, like Ps-Hegesippus (*De Excidio* 1.44.8), to illustrate David's temperance as father and king.

¹¹¹ David was widely recognized as psalmist/musician among early Christians, and his exorcistic reputation even landed him within certain ancient Christian texts of magic/ritual power; see Meyer and Smith 1999, 275–76, 280.

¹¹² Prudentius (*Psychomachia* 291–304) plays on David's reputation as giant-fighter/slayer, but as a model for Christians. Mastrangelo 2008, 99–104: “Prudentius' treatment of Adam, Job, and David explicitly invites the reader to associate himself to those heroes and the virtues they struggle to achieve” (104; cf. 215).

¹¹³ And sometimes with political ends, as with Ambrose; Brown 1992, 111–12.

¹¹⁴ It is not completely certain that Ps-Hegesippus means David. Ps-Hegesippus quotes Ps 142:7a (Vul. 141:8a): “deliver my soul from prison” (*educ de custodia animam meam*), a verbatim rendering of Jerome's LXX Vulgate.

¹¹⁵ Ps 51 was to become “the most commonly recited penitential psalm of the Byzantine liturgy,” appearing alongside David's repentance in the census episode in the late ninth-century *Palaia Historica*, for example, a work influenced by St. Andrew of Crete's eighth-century *Great Canon*; Adler 2011, 26–27. Cf. Ambrose's *Apologia prophetae David*.

(associated with David's flight from Absalom; *De Excidio* 1.44.8). The Davidic Psalms Ps-Hegesippus selects mirror his distinctive picture of David as a thoroughly positive, virtuous, successful historical leader.

In addition to maintaining a purely positive presentation of David, Ps-Hegesippus completely omits any explicit mention of David's Christological and allegorical/typological significance. Such theological valences were the fundamentals of David's early Christian reception. For them to receive no mention within an early Christian work that discusses David is exceptional. For ancient Christian authors, David's psalms,¹¹⁶ his actions, his place as king, his victories in battle – in short, everything about him – were significant of or found their fulfillment in the later, foreshadowed, “real” messiah: Jesus Christ.¹¹⁷ Easily the most striking feature of Ps-Hegesippus' portrayal of David is the absence of such ideas; *De Excidio* 5.9.4 is the closest Ps-Hegesippus comes to this Christological norm, and this passage says nothing explicitly. The David of *De Excidio* hardly resembles the stereotypical Christian David. Instead, he is an ancient Hebrew culture hero whose importance lies in his ability to provide historical illustrations of virtue.

* * *

David is the most oft-cited *exemplum* in all of *De Excidio*. In this chapter we have seen that Ps-Hegesippus uses David to explore issues of ethics, leadership, and military success; David is a cipher for prophetic truth and divine sanction; he is a model monarch, prophet-musician, and family man. Notably, Ps-Hegesippus' David is a thoroughly positive hero: The blemishes of his biblical legacy are erased in his reception. More notably, the David of *De Excidio* as a rule appears without the Christological and allegorical norms of his Christian reception in late antiquity. The terms in which David is treated make him resemble the “secular” *exempla* of Roman historiography. He is not a type of Christ, model of Christian penitence, or all-too-human hero. In almost all ancient Christian literature David appears under the auspices of one or more of these frameworks; not in *De Excidio*.

This chapter marks a methodological turn within this book. Here, rather than explore a particular dynamic or theme, we have explored

¹¹⁶ E.g., for “[Gregory of] Nyssa, the Psalms are the prayer book of David, but since David's life was emblematic in almost every respect to that of Christ, the Psalms were always susceptible to a secondary Christological level of meaning”; Anderson 2006, 277.

¹¹⁷ This idea emerges at Mark 12:37, where Jesus quotes Ps 110:1.

a specific exemplary personality as a window into how Hebrew heroes frame Ps-Hegesippus' Jewish history. The favorite biblical *exemplum* of *De Excidio*, David is the perfect case study. What his presence in the work shows us is that Ps-Hegesippus discusses his Hebrew heroes within categories and literary subcontexts and in terms that resemble the tradition of Roman historiography and exemplarity as much as anything else. This is not to deny clear Judeo-Christian undercurrents supporting David's depiction, but it is to say that the David of *De Excidio* is distinctive in his embodiment of largely classical values. This chapter also illustrates the diversity and breadth of rhetorical things that an author like Ps-Hegesippus can do with an *exemplum* like David: From theorizing kingship to explaining God and history to negotiating wartime or household ethics, David's example paves the way.

In his use of David, Ps-Hegesippus is not only doing intra-narrative work. He is also making a distinctive historiographical contribution to the construction of late antique Christianity. Frances Young showed some time ago that biblical interpretation was an integral part of ancient Christian culture-making.¹¹⁸ By proffering a distinctive depiction of King David across his work, Ps-Hegesippus creates a particular pocket of this literary ferment.

In terms of what David does for Ps-Hegesippus' Jewish history, we have seen that he stands in stark juxtaposition to the first-century Jews of *De Excidio*'s narrative (5.2.1), implies a connection between the Christian author/reader of the work and Hebrew antiquity (5.19.1), and grounds *De Excidio* within architectural and civic *realia* in Jerusalem (1.1.8; 5.9.1). He is also an interpretive key to the work's main theme: Jerusalem's destruction (1.16.3; 5.2.1). This multivalence underscores the main thesis of this book: The heroes of his Old Testament (biblical *exempla*) are a generative tool with which Ps-Hegesippus builds and frames his Jewish history. As we see in [Chapter 7](#), however, this utility could manifest in different ways.

¹¹⁸ Young 1997.

Elisha, Disaster, and Extended Exemplarity in *De Excidio*

Both David and Elisha belong to the four Books of Kingdoms (1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings), the scriptural corpus with which Ps-Hegesippus seems to have the strongest affinity.¹ They illustrate Ps-Hegesippus' engagement with certain *exempla* found in Josephus, but also to what extent he goes beyond his Flavian source. David is a figure whose importance within *De Excidio* emerges via *frequency* of appearance. He appears a dozen times in *De Excidio*, three times as often as in Josephus' *Jewish War*. The prophet Elisha, on the other hand, appears only three times in *De Excidio*. His significance is marked not by frequency of appearance, but by *intensity* of appearance. That is, Elisha's rare appearances in *De Excidio* are usually accompanied by lengthy discussions of biblical events. This I call "extended exemplarity." The rarity of Elisha's appearance in *De Excidio* belies his utility for shaping Israel's prophetic past. And this past, as we shall see, is always measured in terms of the prophet's ability to stave off disaster from God's people.

Elisha appears at *De Excidio* 4.17.1, 5.2.1, and 5.16.1. In each case, Elisha's prophetic bona fides are illustrated by his ability to ward off threats to the health and safety of the people of Israel. He embodies an ancient past in which the close connection between exemplary individuals and divinity produced a kind of safety net for God's people, staving off sickness and destruction. Within a history that tells the story of the destruction of the Jews, Elisha's role has a particular poignancy: Elisha was a prophet to these people's ancestors – what happened?

¹ For Ps-Hegesippus, these books are essentially historical, to be read not "l'esegesi letterale" but "forma narrative del contenuto della Scrittura"; Somenzi 2009, 62–63.

ELISHA AT JERICHO: A REJOINDER TO
JOSEPHUS AT *DE EXCIDIO* 4.17.1

Compared to some biblical figures in *De Excidio*, Elisha makes his entrance late in the game. It is deep into Book 4 that we first encounter the prophet (and, for the only time in the work, his more famous mentor, Elijah). He appears in a topographic digression on the environs of Jericho in *De Excidio* 4.17, where Ps-Hegesippus proffers his own version of the description found in Josephus' *Jewish War* 4.459–75. At the beginning of this description, alongside Joshua and Elijah, Ps-Hegesippus expands the vignette about Elisha:

For there is an abundant spring near the city of Jericho which is quite profitable for drinking and is rich for irrigation – this city which Joshua Naue, a Hebrew by birth, first seized with a strong hand from the race of the Canaanites. Its water-source had originally been quite contaminated, causing sterility in procreation, and not safe for use in drinking. Thereafter, when Elisha—that very disciple of Elijah, by no means an unworthy successor to such a master—was asked by the inhabitants that he leave a token of his sojourn in the places he had visited and remove the corruption from the waters, he provided the remedy, just as the ancient scriptures of the [books of] Kingdoms relate, bidding an earthen vessel with salt be brought to him. Receiving this, he threw the salt into the spring and said: “I have sanitized these waters, and there will no longer be in them anything that kills nor will sterility come from them.” And the waters were sanitized following the word which the prophet Elisha spoke. And following the infusion of the blessed salt, the waters were made suitable and the mouth of the spring was unsealed, the water’s courses were sanctified, so that the channel of its flows poured out the sweetest water for drinking and made sweet all the bitterness of the waters, that the land might provide the most abundant produce, that a fertile succession of productive sprouts might provide a copious abundance of posterity and the generative water should lack nothing, into which divine favor had breathed by the blessings of such a prophet on behalf of the faithful devotion of the righteous. And thus the ripples of the heavenly oracle immediately altered the nature of the water according to the prayers of the prophet, removing their sterility and infusing them with fecundity. Thence there began to grow up generations of men, fruits of the ground, and the moisture, previously dry and bitter, which used to kill the crops and contort with despair the mouths of those who drank it, began to instill fertility into the soil and health into those who drank it, so that if it touched the cultivated ground briefly anywhere, it would benefit more than where the ground had been irrigated for a long time. For this is a novel gift, that that which flows over abundantly might be increased where there is less use, and that wherever anyone had used it more, there its product would be less, and it would water even more than other springs, for even its scanty [flow] spills over in abundance.

De Excidio 4.17.1²

² CSEL 66.1: 267–69.

Following Josephus, Ps-Hegesippus uses Elisha, with Joshua and Elijah, to give the famous Jericho some traditional color.³ In so doing, Ps-Hegesippus betrays a particular interest in the prophet; the differences between his account and Josephus' also provide clues as to how Ps-Hegesippus understood Elisha, as well as the latter's utility in articulating Jewish history.

Josephus' and Ps-Hegesippus' accounts of Elisha's interaction with the Jerichoites agree in their broad strokes. But they differ in their details.⁴ These differences would be tedious to recount *in toto* – here we treat only the most salient.⁵ The most obvious difference appears between the two authors' descriptions of Elisha's words and actions in healing Jericho's waters. Josephus describes Elisha's prayer indirectly, "after he raised his righteous right hand to heaven and poured propitiatory libations upon the ground."⁶ In the *Jewish War*, Elisha asks (ἡτεῖτο) the earth (γῆ) and sky (οὐρανός) to ameliorate the waters and air, respectively, such that Jericho's inhabitants might enjoy abundant produce, healthy procreation, and plenty of water (*War* 4.462–63).⁷ But there is also a caveat: In Josephus' version, Elisha conjures this blessing "as long as [the people of Jericho] remained righteous" (ἕως μενοῦσι δίκαιοι).⁸ Josephus' sketch of these events renders a religiously syncretistic Elisha, a figure who, summoning heaven and earth to act, effects a localized boon through speech-act and ritual.⁹ Such ritual efficacy portrays Elisha not as an eccentric prophet of Yahweh but as a kind of generic holy man common within

³ Compare David (and Solomon) as associated with Jerusalem at *De Excidio* 1.1.8 (and 5.9.1).

⁴ Strabo's *Geography* (16.2.41–44), e.g., is discussed in relation to Josephus' description; Shahar 2004, 211.

⁵ Somenzi 2009, 34–35, points out that part of Ps-Hegesippus' description of Jericho echoes (with Ambrose *Hexameron libri sex* 5.69 and also *De Excidio* 5.25.1) Vergil's *Georgics* (4.109). Somenzi also argues that the etymology of *opobalsamum* demonstrates that either Ps-Hegesippus and Ambrose shared a source (perhaps a commentary on Vergil *Georgica* 2.118–19) or that one was reliant upon the other (53–54).

⁶ Josephus *War* 4.462 (LCL 487: 293): ἔπειτα εἰς οὐρανὸν δεξιὰν ἀνατείνας δικαίαν κατὰ γῆς σπονδὰς μελικτηρίου χέμενος.

⁷ Feldman 1998b, 334, refers to Elisha's antics as "natural causality," notes the miracle's absence from the *Antiquities*, and argues that Josephus will have been more comfortable remembering the feat before the War's Jewish audience.

⁸ Schwartz 1990 reads this as "probably reflecting the destruction of the city during the War" (33n37).

⁹ Josephus *War* 4.464 (LCL 487: 292–93) has Elisha effect the change "by these prayers, supplemented by various ritual ceremonies" (ταύταις ταῖς εὐχαῖς πολλὰ προσχειρουρήσας ἐξ ἐπιστήμης). Feldman 2006, 354–55: Josephus excludes this episode from the *Antiquities*, where he "normally shies away from including miracles or rationalizes them."

the ancient Mediterranean world.¹⁰ Ps-Hegesippus returns the story to its biblical moorings, while adding some eccentricities of his own.

Ps-Hegesippus follows Josephus in including the framework of hospitality to explain Elisha's provision of a *remedium* for the waters to the residents of Jericho, something absent from the biblical account. Unlike Josephus, however, Ps-Hegesippus explicitly cites the biblical Books of Kingdoms (*Regnorum uetus scriptura*) as source for his re-edition,¹¹ and follows to some extent the shorter biblical account:

Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Behold now, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad and the land is unfruitful." He said, "Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. He went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'I have purified these waters; there shall not be from here death or unfruitfulness any longer.'" So the waters have been purified to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

2 Kings 2:19–22

Ps-Hegesippus closely paraphrases Elisha's reception and use of the clay jar and salt and more or less verbatim restates his pronouncement,¹² but with one key difference: Whereas the biblical Elisha pronounces that "the LORD has said," in *De Excidio* he simply states that "I have sanitized" (*sanaui*) these waters.¹³ Otherwise, *De Excidio*'s account resembles a paraphrase of the Vulgate. Ps-Hegesippus then repeats the final line of the biblical account (less the temporal marker "to this day" – Ps-Hegesippus lived at a much later time): *et sanatae sunt aquae secundum uerbum inquit Helisei prophetae*. Where Josephus proceeds beyond the biblical

¹⁰ Smith 1987 identifies Elisha's portrayal as a Greco-Roman "divine man" in action (254); Schwartz 1990, 33, reads Josephus' replacement of a "simple prophetic command" with "gesticulations, libations, [and] prayers to heaven (!)" as his turning "the story into a display of *arete* ('virtue' – i.e., magical power) by a Hellenistic *goes* (magician)," which he nevertheless attributes to some "guidebook" Josephus must have been using; Feldman 1994 points out that here and elsewhere Josephus extends Elisha's biblical actions to accentuate his δικαιοσύνη and φιλανθρωπία, and notes correspondences between Josephus and stories familiar to Greek readers (15–16, 25); Kottek 1994 attributes to Josephus' expansion of the Jericho episode "a definite Hippocratic flavor" à la *Airs, Waters, Places* (19n23).

¹¹ Somenzi 2009, 74–75, shows that Ps-Hegesippus' use of the participle *moriens* to describe the water in Elisha's pronouncement points to his use of a (*Vetus Latina*) biblical text corresponding to the so-called Antiochene Text (which has ἀποθνήσκων) as opposed to the LXX (which reads θάνατος).

¹² A few mss read *mors* and *sterilitas* instead of *moriens* and *sterilis*, apparently in line with the Vulgate.

¹³ In the Vulgate Elisha is addressed as "lord" (*domine*) by the men of Jericho, and then we read that "the lord said" (*dicit dominus*) that the waters were clean.

account, Ps-Hegesippus freely changes the details of Josephus' account and adds a number of his own.¹⁴

For example, Ps-Hegesippus inserts a quick explanatory note regarding the actual mechanism of the bitter waters' having been made sweet – “by the infusion of salt” (*salis infusion*; cf. 2 Kgs 2:21) – and the resultant local effect: “the mouth of the spring was unsealed” (*reserata ora fontis*). He also adds a trifold causal explanation for the miraculous event: (1) divine favor (*diuina gratia*) infused (*adspirauisset*) the water through (2) the blessings of so great a prophet (*tanti prophetae benedictionibus*) as Elisha made (3) on behalf of the faithful devotion of the righteous inhabitants of Jericho (*pro iustorum fidelibus studiis*) who asked for such a thing. He then reiterates, combining physical and spiritual description in stating that the ripples/reverberations of the heavenly oracle (*caelestis oraculi resultatio*) changed the very nature of the waters in accordance with Elisha's prayers (*conuertit itaque naturam aquarum ad preces prophetae*). This guarantees that ultimate credit for the miracle goes to God, while also adding (visual) vivification to the story (i.e., *enargeia*).¹⁵ As a good historian willing to explain how things work and answer questions of causality, Ps-Hegesippus uses Josephus and the Bible, but ultimately outstrips both in recounting the legend of Elisha's sanitation of Jericho's waters.

Comparing Ps-Hegesippus' treatment of the Elisha–Jericho episode with the biblical and Josephan accounts prompts several observations. First, Ps-Hegesippus prefers biblical storyline to Josephan rewrite. This may be discerned from his recapitulation of the entire biblical episode, sometimes in language that borders on citation. This he favors over Josephus' casting of Elisha as a generic Mediterranean holy man. For Ps-Hegesippus, ancient Hebrew *exempla* and the history they populate are best sourced from *uetus scriptura*. Such sourcing underscores Ps-Hegesippus' authority as a biblically literate historian. Second, Ps-Hegesippus' penning of the episode connects Elisha's prayers (*preces*), blessing (*benedictum/benedictio*), and speech/actions (*accipio, deicio, dico, inquam*) closely with the divine sphere (*diuina gratia, caeleste oraculum*). Even more than the biblical text, *De Excidio* 4.17.1 casts Elisha as the divinely sanctioned and paragonic *propheta*, a role with which he is identified no fewer than four times. *De Excidio*'s version

¹⁴ But he does follow Josephus in noting that the spring's “healing” resulted in produce and healthy childbearing.

¹⁵ See Feldherr 1998, 4–36.

of the Jericho water episode celebrates *Heliseus propheta* as an ideal. Third, even the inhabitants of Jericho are singled out as righteous (*iusti*) in Ps-Hegesippus' narrative; they are characterized by *fidelia studia*. Together with the lionization of Elisha, this paints a picture of an idyllic antiquity in Judea, in line with a contrast between Hebrew antiquity and Jewish "modernity" (Chapter 4).

Why would Ps-Hegesippus care to change Josephus' version of this vignette? For one thing, this is what ancient historians did: The writer of history would improve upon his sources, doing an intricate dance between tradition, ingenuity, and authority.¹⁶ At the same time, Ps-Hegesippus' revisions betray his loyalties: Biblical history trumps Josephan history. Elisha's reconfiguration at *De Excidio* 4.17.1 bespeaks Ps-Hegesippus' concerted interest in biblical narrative and in demonstrating a mastery of it. That is, Elisha provides Ps-Hegesippus with narrative space to play with biblical history. This results in a reflexive dynamic whereby the figure of Elisha shapes the legendary locale of Jericho and, in turn, Jericho – still standing during the first century of *De Excidio*'s narrative, which is why it appears within the work at all – shapes the figure of Elisha. This reminds the reader of Judea's storied past and recalls the fact that Hebrew heroes stand in the historical and geographical background of the narrative.

Another aspect of *De Excidio* 4.17.1 in which Elisha participates reflects a confluence of Judeo-Christian tradition and classical literary culture. Already in Josephus' description of Jericho we see the combination of Judean geography and myth with the classical tendency toward *ekphrasis* and geography, common in historiography and particularly associated with figures like Strabo and Pliny the Elder. Yuval Shahar has shown that Josephus' geographical descriptions, including that of Jericho, betray engagement with this Roman literary milieu.¹⁷ In the same vein, Ps-Hegesippus is known to have been in conversation with Roman authors like Tacitus in constructing his own *geographica Judaica*,¹⁸ and *De Excidio* certainly betrays a penchant for *ekphrasis* in certain passages (e.g., 5.9.1–4). But where do Hebrew heroes fit into this? In fact, the Greco-Roman tradition (as well as the Judeo-Christian) knew well the habit of mentioning ancient heroes in relation to "modern" places as a way of demonstrating antiquity; explaining origins, character, or

¹⁶ See again Marincola 1997.

¹⁷ Shahar 2004, e.g., 211–41.

¹⁸ Bloch 2002, 190–92; 2012, 380–83.

import; or simply spicing up a narrative. For such reasons Pliny the Elder inserts figures like Romulus, Scipio Africanus, and Cato into his descriptive *Natural History*.¹⁹ In improving upon Josephus, Ps-Hegesippus turns out to be doing a rather classical thing in correlating Elisha (and Joshua and Elijah) with Jericho as part of his history.²⁰ As with his character speeches, such a literary feature gives *De Excidio* the feel of classical historiography. More to the point, it illustrates again how biblical *exempla* help define *De Excidio*'s narrative topography.

We have already noted how Ps-Hegesippus' use of Elisha at *De Excidio* 4.17.1 stands in some contradistinction to Josephus' earlier version of that story. Ps-Hegesippus reinserts biblical details into the scene, connects Elisha explicitly to the divine sphere, and drives home the point (via repetition) that Elisha is *propheta*, a holy messenger who speaks truth (to water, in this case). Finally, within this character portrait in action we behold an aspect of Elisha's persona that will follow him throughout his appearances in *De Excidio*: namely, he is an expert in disaster relief. In eschewing death and distress at Jericho, Elisha reveals his core identity as *exemplum* in *De Excidio*.

EXTENDED EXEMPLARITY: ELISHA AT *DE EXCIDIO* 5.2.1 AND 5.16.1

At *De Excidio* 5.2.1, where Elisha appears alongside four other Hebrew heroes in Ps-Hegesippus' great epideictic address (see [Chapter 4](#)), we see a hint of an extended sequence of biblical stories that he associates with this *exemplum*. There, allusions to 2 Kgs 5 and 7 suggest that even in that brief recollection of the prophet Ps-Hegesippus has a series of stories in mind, rather than one defining feat or moment within the prophet's career. That is, for Ps-Hegesippus, Elisha is not defined by or restricted to one typifying scene that encapsulates his paradigmatic meaning. This is very different from, say, Aaron: The only biblical action with which Aaron is associated in *De Excidio* is the rebellion turned authority contest of Numbers 16 and 17.²¹ Elisha's legacy is larger, broader. I suggest this betrays some kind of special interest in Elisha. And, without trying

¹⁹ Pliny *Naturalis historia* 15.77, 120; 16.236 (Romulus); 14.49; 16.234 (Scipio Africanus); 3.124; 16.230 (Cato).

²⁰ Cf. Abraham's association with Hebron at *De Excidio* 4.23.2 (cf. Josephus *War* 4.530–33).

²¹ *De Excidio* 3.16.1; 3.17.1; 5.2.1 (x2); 5.9.4; 5.16.1.

to speak to Ps-Hegesippus' motives, I argue that the effect of presenting Elisha in the context of numerous different biblical episodes, sometimes at great length (see later), creates a kind of exemplarity different from what one finds with most Hebrew heroes in *De Excidio*. Indeed, it is, as we shall see, different from many of the habits of exemplarity within ancient literature writ large.

In *De Excidio* 5.16, Ps-Hegesippus has Josephus (the speaker) recall a lengthy account of Elisha's exemplary deeds. Drawn from the early books of 2 Kings (3 Kingdoms), these stories sit alongside a host of other biblical *exempla* with which Ps-Hegesippus expands and reworks the speech of Josephus spanning *De Excidio* 5.15–16 (cf. *Jewish War* 5.362–419; see [Chapter 9](#)). Josephus steers all of these *exempla* toward an overarching point: to wit, the heroes of Hebrew antiquity approached their many dilemmas with a God-focused intentionality characterized by faith and prayer, a far cry from the stubborn bellicosity being perpetrated by the Jews in Jerusalem. It is within this argumentative matrix that Ps-Hegesippus reintroduces his prized prophet.²²

Less than halfway through the second part of his speech, Josephus recollects the famous story of 2 Kgs 19:35 (cf. Isa 37:36). There “the Angel of the LORD” strikes down 185,000 Assyrians during the night on behalf of Hezekiah and Jerusalem/Judah.²³ This historic victory shows God's people not fighting for their freedom, but being fought *for* by their God. Josephus then backtracks and introduces a similar story, which, he avers, he ought not to have passed by:

But I have passed over the affair of the five kings, whom, when they had gone to war without consulting the Lord and were passing through the desert, lack of water began to afflict grievously and to torment both themselves and their horses with thirst. Necessity constrained them to right their foregone duty. For the king of Israel had been negligent regarding the worship of God; nevertheless, being encouraged by others to seek the counsel of a prophet of God, he discovered that Elisha was not very far away from the areas in which they were passing time. He asked pitifully for

²² Other prophets appear infrequently in *De Excidio*: Elijah is only mentioned in the Jericho pericope, as Elisha's mentor; Isaiah and Jeremiah each appear once (both at 5.16.1); Naboth (1 Kgs 21) is called *propheta* at 5.32.1; and the *propheta* mentioned most frequently is David, though his role is far more variegated than that of prophet only. Far more frequently than it refers to individuals as *prophetae*, *De Excidio* mentions the prophets as a group representative of divine word, will, and sanction (see 2.12.1 [x2]; 5.2.1 [x4]; 5.16.1).

²³ This is actually an exemplary episode that Josephus himself inserts into his speech (*War* 5.388), though he names neither Hezekiah nor any other character from the story save Sennacherib.

the aid of prayer and a solution to their troubles. Granted that he was hated by the king of Israel—for he was being disingenuous and did not believe—nevertheless, he promised them both an abundant supply of water and a swift victory. Water began to flow through the desert and its streams began spontaneously to pour themselves out upon the ground without any rain. Standing up, their adversaries who, sure of victory, a deep sleep had pressed into relaxed diligence, suddenly saw waters running red, because the sun was shining on it, and thought that a battle had been fought amongst the peoples of the kings, whose blood had then saturated the ground. And then they hastened to run to the plunder without order and without a plan, with one man outstripping another. Running thus headlong into the midst of the enemy they were trenched in and killed, giving themselves up to a massive slaughter. Thus did the holy prophet equally dispel both thirst and fear from our fathers. He offered the same kind of help against starvation. For when Samaria was under siege and the king of Israel remained closed up within it, a severe hunger pressed hard [upon him], so that he would not abstain even from the most abominable forms of nourishment. The prophet, coming forward because of the vileness of such suffering and because of the declaration of the king, who believed that the famine exposed the prophet's negligence, responded: "On the following day you will see more than enough food and resources." He said to the one who did not believe his announcement, that he would not see it because he did not believe, yet the faithfulness of the promises would remain. Then, unexpectedly by night within the Syrian camps the neighing of horses, the din of chariots, the rumbling of *quadrigae*, and the sound of armed troops were heard so as to strike fear into the victors because many and strong *gentes* had come to the Hebrews' aid and were bearing down on them, or so they thought, and they made haste to remove themselves from the danger by flight. The night hastened their decisions and increased their terror. When the Syrians had fled, all of the supplies which had come into their tents were discovered the following day. Abundance produced benefit, benefit enlivened faith, yet truly death seized the benefit from the one who did not believe, though this did not impede the common relief.

De Excidio 5.16.1²⁴

The length of this passage alone marks it out as significant and suggests that its star, the prophet Elisha, is an important figure for Josephus the narrative character and thus for Ps-Hegesippus the author. This passage stands out for its length and intensity. So what does it have to tell us?

As earlier at *De Excidio* 4.17.1, so here at 5.16.1 comparing Ps-Hegesippus to his biblical precedents helps isolate his interpretive and rhetorical idiosyncrasies. To begin with, the first story, that of the five kings (*de quinque regibus*), refers to 2 Kgs 3, which is actually a story of four kings.²⁵ There, Jehoram King of Israel (also called Joram) joins with Jehoshaphat King of Judah and the King of Edom to combat Mesha King

²⁴ CSEL 66.1: 326–27.

²⁵ There are two stories of "five kings" in the biblical record: Num 31:8 and Josh 10:5–23. But cf. Gen 14:9.

of Moab, the latter having foregone his customary tribute to Jehoram after the death of his father Ahab.²⁶ As in Ps-Hegesippus' recounting, in the biblical story the three kings move to fight against Moab by the "way of the wilderness" (2 Kgs 3:8) and there they run out of water (3:9). Ps-Hegesippus attributes this to the kings' having gone to war *inconsulto domino*, without consulting the Lord – never a good idea. Though the biblical text does not say this, it could be read to imply it. Ps-Hegesippus' explanation is an interpretive inference in line with the rhetorical tenor of Josephus' speech: Wars are waged rightly only when waged in consultation with God. Thus does he credit *necessitas* with forcing the kings to observe the *officium* they had foregone,²⁷ in particular the *cultus dei* of which the *rex Israel* (Jehoram) had been negligent (*neglegens*).²⁸

In the biblical story, when Jehoram bemoaned their dire straits, Jehoshaphat suggested that they consult a prophet of the Lord (2 Kgs 3:11).²⁹ More vaguely, in *De Excidio* Jehoram is encouraged "by others" (*ab aliis*) to seek out a *propheta domini*. This implicit softening of Jehoshaphat's pious influence may reflect Ps-Hegesippus' interest in focusing his praise upon the prophet Elisha himself.³⁰ In *De Excidio*, Jehoram (i.e., *rex Israel*) and Elisha are the active parties, representing respectively the right way and the wrong way to wage war. Ps-Hegesippus' language bears this out: Jehoram asks Elisha pitifully (*misere*) for both *auxilia preactionis et remedia necessitatis*. Elisha is offended (*offensus*) at the King of Israel's duplicity and unbelief (*quia perfidus non credebatur*). Still, he proves willing and able to provide both *aqua* and *uictoria*. Ps-Hegesippus omits the hostile exchange between Jehoram and Elisha found in 2 Kgs 3:13–14, as he does Elisha's ritual and practical applications for effecting the promised aid (3:15–16)³¹ and the conditions upon which victory is to be given: Israel must ruin utterly the Moabite land (3:17–19). Ps-Hegesippus is only interested in Elisha's miracle, accomplished by faith and prayer.

²⁶ Cf. Josephus *Ant.* 9.29–43 with Begg 1993. *De Excidio* is not influenced by this passage.

²⁷ *Necessitas* here conveying "need" or "want": Dwyer 1931, 62, 91.

²⁸ Josephus *Ant.* 9.27 speaks of Jehoram's lawlessness (*παρανομία*), impiety (*ἀσεβεία*), and failure to worship/render service to (*θρησκεύειν*) God.

²⁹ Jehoshaphat plays an identical role at 1 Kgs 22.

³⁰ In 2 Kgs 3:11–12 Jehoshaphat inquires whether there is not a prophet of the Lord "here," where they then were; a servant points out that Elisha, disciple of Elijah, was. Jehoshaphat confirms Elisha's divine connection and seeks him out. In *De Excidio*, the role of Jehoshaphat, whom Josephus marks as *δίκαιος* (*Ant.* 9.33), has disappeared.

³¹ Elisha first asks for a minstrel to play an instrument (2 Kgs 3:15), which apparently inspires him with the idea to fill the Valley of Edom (where they were) with trenches (3:16). According to the Talmud (b. *Shabb.* 30b), the function of the minstrel was to return Elisha's prophetic spirit, which he had lost.

Ps-Hegesippus' focus on Elisha's miracle becomes clear in the explanatory details he adds to the biblical account, specifying that after Elisha's promise (*promisit*) the water that appeared in the desert did so spontaneously (*sponte*), without rain (*sine ullis imbribus*),³² and from the ground (*se ... infundere terris*).³³ His rendering of the ensuing account is also distinctive when compared to the biblical story. In the version of the story in 2 Kings we read:

Now all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. And all who were able to put on armor and older were summoned and stood on the border. They rose early in the morning, and the sun shone on the water, and the Moabites saw the water opposite them as red as blood. Then they said, "This is blood; the kings have surely fought together, and they have slain one another. Now therefore, Moab, to the spoil!" But when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites arose and struck the Moabites, so that they fled before them; and they went forward into the land, slaughtering the Moabites.

2 Kings 3:21–24

While the biblical account has Moab summoning every able-bodied man to arms to fight on the defensive, Ps-Hegesippus refers to the *aduersarii* as certain of victory (*securos uictoriae*) and thus weighed down by sleep (*somnus uberior ... presserat*) and lax in diligence (*laxata ... sollicitudine*). Is Ps-Hegesippus allowing entertainment value to trump biblical "accuracy"? These enemies, also (implicitly) operating without the prayerful piety that Ps-Hegesippus is pushing, are more impulsive in *De Excidio* than in the Bible: They hasten to run immediately with no order and no plan (*festinantes passim sine ordine sine modo currere*), tripping over each other. This headlong (*praecipites*) venture results in their massive slaughter. Significantly, Ps-Hegesippus does not include the denouement of the 2 Kings episode: There the Israelites enter further into Moab and spoil the land (3:24–26), only to be foiled by the King of Moab's offering of his eldest son as a burnt offering from the city wall, which somehow turns the tides on the Israelites (3:27).³⁴ In *De Excidio*, the episode ends with the slaughter of the Moabites, proving Josephus' rhetorical point that prayer and faith guarantee success. As we might expect, Ps-Hegesippus ends his account by zeroing in again on Elisha: *Ita sanctus propheta a patribus nostris sitim partier et metum depulit*.³⁵

³² This detail is contained in 2 Kgs 3:17 and Josephus *Ant.* 9.36.

³³ 2 Kgs 3:20 only records that at the time of the sacrifice, "water came ... and the country was filled with water."

³⁴ 2 Kgs 3:27.

³⁵ The twofold nature of Elisha's provision corresponds to Jehoram's twofold request mentioned earlier.

Both structurally and in the minutia, Ps-Hegesippus rewrites the biblical episode of 2 Kgs 3 in the mouth of Josephus to emphasize and epitomize the point that right religiosity – here contained in the terms *officium*, *cultus*, *precatio*, *fides*, and belief (*credo*) – necessarily attends success. This is how the Jews should wage war, Josephus argues, like their ancestors (*patres*) did. At the bookends of this episode stands Elisha (*Heliseus*), identified as *propheta domini* and *sanctus propheta*. Ps-Hegesippus uses Elisha to contest the legitimate roles and characteristics corresponding to national leadership. Elisha the *propheta* contrasts with the *rex Israel*: He is able to provide the *auxilia* and *remedia* that the latter cannot. Elisha embodies a leadership that is attendant to God and successful, much as he does in *De Excidio* 5.2.1 (Chapter 4). In the context of Josephus' speech at 5.16, Elisha demonstrates that piety, not martial prowess, is what is needed to achieve victory. Yet, while Josephus argues that this is how his countrymen *should* wage war, this is not how they end up doing so. In historical contrast, Elisha embodies the model leader who leads his people to war rightly, the main thing that the Jews of *De Excidio* fail to do.

After the programmatic statement concluding the 2 Kgs 3 story to the effect that Elisha the *sanctus propheta* dispelled both thirst and fear from “our fathers” (*a patribus nostris*) – remember that Josephus is the speaking character here – Ps-Hegesippus transitions to a different tale. To signal this, he states that just as Elisha dealt with *sitis* and *metus*, so he furnished the same kind of help (*idemque ... auxilium*) against hunger (*fames*). With this Ps-Hegesippus turns to the narrative of 2 Kgs 6–7, where the King of Israel is under siege in Samaria. In response to the siege and the famine it caused, Elisha effects a miracle whereby the supernatural sound of numerous troops and horses scares the besieging Arameans (*Syriae* for Ps-Hegesippus) away, leaving their provisions unguarded for the taking. As is his habit, Ps-Hegesippus paraphrases and reconstructs the narrative to highlight certain points and people.³⁶

Ps-Hegesippus introduces the siege recounted in 2 Kgs 6:24–7:20 without the Bible's level of detail. He euphemistically collapses the Bible's account of a donkey's head being sold for eighty silver shekels, a portion of dove's dung selling for five silver shekels, and two women negotiating to eat their sons (2 Kgs 6:25–29) – horrendous travesties emphasizing the

³⁶ Somenzi 2009, 66, reads *uilitas* (“low prices” or “affordability”) instead of Ussani's *utilitas* (“benefit”) in the summarizing phrase: *abundantia uilitatem creauit, uilitas fidem impleuit*. Cf. Ambrose *Off.* 3.123.

brutality of siege/famine – into the brief (under)statement that the inhabitants of the city abstained not even from the most abominable forms of nourishment (*a nefandis ... alimentis*).³⁷ In the biblical account, it is after hearing the argument between the two cannibalizing mothers that the King of Israel introduces Elisha into the story (2 Kgs 6:31), promising to behead him (apparently because Elisha had failed to protect the city from so grotesque a state of affairs). Elisha receives (actually foresees) this message while sitting in his house and thus responds *to the king's edict* (2 Kgs 6:32–33). Ps-Hegesippus rearranges the order and details of this scene, clarifies the king's motives and meanings, and perhaps assumes knowledge of the episode on the part of the reader. In Ps-Hegesippus' rendering, Elisha appears first – *conuentus propheta* – and he does so (first) on account of the grotesqueness of such misery (*tantae miseriae deformitate*)³⁸ and *also* because of the king's edict (*nuntio regis*). In *De Excidio*, Elisha is not the harassed and coerced prophet but a proactive respondent (the only one) to a national crisis. Ps-Hegesippus also clarifies the *nuntius regis* as motivated by the king's belief (*putaret*) that the *fames* proved the prophet's negligence (*prophetae dissimulatione ... adoleuisse*). As with the 2 Kgs 3 episode, Ps-Hegesippus will highlight belief and nonbelief as the key interpretive factors of the 2 Kgs 6–7 siege story.

After Ps-Hegesippus summarizes the pronouncement made by Elisha in 2 Kgs 7:1,³⁹ where the prophet promises an abundance of food by the morrow,⁴⁰ he returns to the theme of faith: He recalls that Elisha thereafter pronounced (*dixit*) upon the one who did not believe his message (*non credenti nuntio*) that, although the trustworthiness of the promises (*fides promissorum*) would hold, he would not see them because he did

³⁷ Ps-Hegesippus' phrasing here could echo Livy 23.19.13 (*nec muribus alioue animali abstinerent*); see Brakman 1932, 332. Cf. the language of the Latin version of Josephus' War 6.193ff. It may strike one as surprising that Ps-Hegesippus does not bring up the mother–son cannibalism recounted in 2 Kgs 6, given that a few chapters later (*De Excidio* 5.40) he will expand Josephus' horrific “Maria story,” where a Jewish woman besieged in Jerusalem goes crazy and kills, cooks, and eats her infant son (see Bay 2022 and Chapter 3 of this book).

³⁸ Ps-Hegesippus seems to assume the reader's knowledge of the details of this *miseria*.

³⁹ Ps-Hegesippus condenses the biblical details that a measure of fine flour was to be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel into Elisha's laconic statement: “On the following day you will see food both more than enough and useful.” This paraphrase qualifies the Bible's quantitative figures.

⁴⁰ Ps-Hegesippus does not include the biblical formulas (2 Kgs 7:1) “hear the word of the Lord” or “thus says the Lord,” thus placing more focus on Elisha. This is also characteristic of Josephus: Begg and Spilsbury 2005, 140n285. Both Josephus and Ps-Hegesippus omit such phrases here and, e.g., in their version of the Jericho episode.

not believe (*quia non crederet non uisurum*).⁴¹ Unlike the biblical account (2 Kgs 7:2), Ps-Hegesippus does not specify this unbeliever as a royal officer; in fact, an unfamiliar reader might assume this person to be the very *rex Israel* mentioned just before. The omission of this detail generalizes the moral of the story (belief provides, unbelief kills) and allows the focus to remain on Elisha. Ps-Hegesippus omits an even bigger detail of the biblical narrative by removing from the storyline completely the four lepers who are said to have found and first enjoyed the spoils left by the fleeing Arameans (2 Kgs 7:3–10).⁴² In *De Excidio*, a passive verb replaces the Bible's leprous actors: After the *Syriae* has fled, their resources "were found" (*reperate*) in their tents. Ps-Hegesippus is concerned first and foremost to stress Elisha's prominence and the importance of faith, even to the point of painting over other characters.

In describing the miraculous event that caused the enemy to flee by night, Ps-Hegesippus improves upon the biblical account, where the Arameans heard the sound of chariots, of horses, and of a great army (2 Kgs 7:6a), with a fourfold iteration of the sounds' sources: *hinnitus equorum*, *currum fragor*, *quadrigarum currentium fremitus*, *armorum sonitus*.⁴³ This stylistic emendation forefronts the importance of the event (which is attached to and reflects upon Elisha) and conveys literary artistry.⁴⁴ The impression that the event itself (along with the person who brought it about) is the focal point in *De Excidio* is strengthened by the fact that Ps-Hegesippus does not name the *multae ac ualidae gentes* whom the *Syriae* guess have come to the Israelites' aid – in 2 Kgs 7:6b the Arameans suppose that "Hittites" and "Egyptians" have come to help Israel. Just as importantly, Ps-Hegesippus has the enemy assume that these nations have come to the aid of the *Hebrews* (*in auxilium Hebraeis*), whereas 2 Kgs 7 only ever refers to Israel (7:13) or the King of Israel (7:6, 13). Ps-Hegesippus has turned this episode into one that occurs in a specifically *Hebrew* antiquity and in which Elisha is the only named actor. This reconfiguration jibes with the end of the episode in

⁴¹ Josephus exaggerates the officer's unbelief (*Ant.* 9.73) for effect; see [Feldman 1998b](#), 336.

⁴² In 2 Kgs 7:3–10, these lepers go over to surrender to the Arameans, finding them gone but their possessions remaining, and thus are the first to enjoy the abandoned spoils; after a while they report their findings to the king.

⁴³ Compare *De Excidio* 5.2.1, where it was *fragor quadrigarum*, *uox equitum*, and *uox uirtutis* that chased the *Syriae* away, by which means (the) "*Iudaeus*" ("the Jew," i.e., Jewish people, or perhaps the Jewish king) escaped *obsidio*.

⁴⁴ Ps-Hegesippus' wording is here and at *De Excidio* 5.2.1 closer to Ambrose (*Off.* 3.121; cf. *Ep.* 51.7) than to the Greek (Antiochene) biblical text; [Somenzi 2009](#), 75–77.

De Excidio, where the *abundantia* provided by Elisha produced (*creauit*) *utilitas* that enlivened (*impleuit*) *fides*: Here, as before, the person who did not believe (who was *incredulus*) and thus did not enjoy the benefits accrued to the rest of the people (*publicum remedium*) is anonymous. By the end of Ps-Hegesippus' retelling of this story, Elisha remains the only person the reader recognizes by name.

It is worth noting here that, again, Ps-Hegesippus' portrayal of this episode differs markedly from that of Josephus.⁴⁵ The latter, in the *Antiquities* (9.61–86), names all of the actors and includes, even alters and expands, the Bible's details regarding the city's economic situation in famine under siege (9.62–63), the tale of the two cannibal mothers (8.64–67), and the lepers' finding of the absent army's supplies (9.74–81). Josephus expands J(eh)oram's role (here and elsewhere) and centrality, lauding the Israelite king.⁴⁶ As with 2 Kgs 3, however, Ps-Hegesippus is not influenced by Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, a fact that borders on ironic given that the 2 Kgs 6–7 narrative appears in the mouth of the character Josephus at *De Excidio* 5.16.1.

The 2 Kgs 6–7 narrative as refabricated in *De Excidio* 5.16.1 conforms to the rhetorical contours of Josephus' overall speech. Josephus urges the Jews to act toward the Romans with *fides*. It is appropriate for him in this context to cast Elisha as a paradigm of national leadership. Elisha provides a lesson in how to approach an enemy: not by conventional means but in concert with divine aid. Ps-Hegesippus' lionization of Elisha, compounded by his being the solitary figure named in the narrative, fits with his proclivity to counterpoise heroic figures of Hebrew antiquity with the inefficient and immoral Jewish leadership of the Roman Jewish War. One should not miss the aptness of the Elisha *exemplum* here: Elisha helped ancient Hebrews avoid a siege that caused famine, fear, and horrible things like cannibalism – this is recounted within a narrative (*De Excidio*) about a siege (of Jerusalem) that caused the exact same things (see especially *De Excidio* 5.40). The difference is, the Jews of first-century Jerusalem lacked an Elisha.

Elisha, like other *exempla* in *De Excidio*, allows Ps-Hegesippus to talk about important issues, whether in his own narratorial voice or in that of his narrative actor Josephus. Elisha demonstrates the importance of

⁴⁵ Josephus' rendition is a mystery because we do not know his sources: "he never used any known Greek translation of the Bible for 1–2 Kings"; Nodet 2010, 41.

⁴⁶ See Feldman 1994.

faith and the deadliness of unbelief. Elisha also demonstrates the capacity of divine accompaniment, embodied in the person of the prophet, to prevent or mitigate disaster. Elisha excels in emergency management, and might well equally merit the nickname given to the thirty-first US President, Herbert Hoover (1929–1933): “master of emergency.”⁴⁷ In addition, Elisha illustrates what I am calling “extended exemplarity”: especially at *De Excidio* 5.16.1, Elisha is remembered in the context of numerous biblical episodes, and his treatment there covers a significant portion of Josephus’ speech. In this Elisha is unlike most other biblical *exempla* of *De Excidio*, the majority of which appear very briefly, often in relation to one specific event. Elisha shows that Ps-Hegesippus’ biblical exemplarity varies in intensity.

EXTENDED EXEMPLARITY IN ROMAN CULTURE

This phenomenon that I am calling “extended exemplarity” is a notable feature of the Roman use of *exempla*. Measured against the model provided by the Roman tradition of exemplarity, Ps-Hegesippus’ portrayal of Elisha, and his use of biblical *exempla* overall, comes into sharper focus.

Consider the example of three of the most quintessential *exempla* in the ancient Roman mind: Horatius Cocles, Cloelia, and Mucius Scaevola. Matthew Roller treats all three in his recent book, *Models from the Past in Roman Culture*.⁴⁸ These Roman culture heroes were known for a famous one-man stand on the *pons sublicius* upon the River Tiber (Horatius);⁴⁹ a brave and indomitable swim across the Tiber away from Etruscan captors and back to the Romans (Cloelia);⁵⁰ and the voluntary immolation of a hand before the Etruscan King Porsenna to demonstrate bravery (Mucius).⁵¹ That is, one specific exemplary feat defined each of these Roman *exempla*. Not only was it the case that Roman *exempla* were often remembered in the context of a single legendary pericope, but it was also normal for *exempla* to appear only once in a given work. Jane

⁴⁷ Hoover’s presidency witnessed the onset of the Great Depression – the nickname is less ironic when applied to Elisha.

⁴⁸ Roller 2018, see ch. 1 (Horatius), ch. 2 (Cloelia), and 32–33, then 32–65 and 65–94.

⁴⁹ Recounted in Polybius’ description of the recounting of ancestral deeds at aristocratic funerals (see 6.54.6–55.4).

⁵⁰ Livy 2.13.4–11; Valerius Maximus 3.2.2.

⁵¹ Livy 2.12.1–13.1.

Chaplin has noted this tendency in Livy.⁵² The Roman tradition brims over with *exempla* who are known for a singular deed and/or are mentioned only once in a given history. Likewise, *De Excidio* is full of biblical *exempla* who only ever appear in the context of one biblical scene and/or in one passage. Of the fifty-three biblical *exempla* named in *De Excidio*, thirty-one (58 percent) appear only once (see [Appendix 1](#)) and in relation to one episode. Elisha, however, as we have seen, represents the propensity for Ps-Hegesippus to remember certain *exempla* at length, across a host of traditional tales, and more than once.

This tendency, “extended exemplarity,” also crops up in the Roman tradition. The Roman historians associated certain ancient heroes with extended narratives spanning more than a moment in that figure’s legendary lifetime. Famous figures like Romulus, Scipio Africanus, and Cato the Elder were not remembered for one particular deed or a single scene, but were *exempla* with known stories; Roman authors and readers could recall lengthy portions of their lives and would be able to point to a number of different stories involving such figureheads. In Livy, for example, Romulus, Scipio, and Cato all receive multiple mentions referencing multiple historical events. Another example of this feature in the Roman tradition involves the Roman general Marcus Furius Camillus, the longest-ruling dictator previous to Sulla and Julius Caesar and sometimes called the “second founder of Rome.”⁵³ Camillus was well known not just for his recovery of Rome from the Gauls (390 BCE), but also for his capture of Veii and subsequent events (he was named dictator in 396 BCE). These heroic stories are frequently recalled at length, and they are joined by many others.⁵⁴ Camillus, then, provides an example of extended exemplarity among Roman historians. Incidentally, one could draw a number of close connections between Camillus’ legacy and that of Elisha in *De Excidio*.⁵⁵ All of this is to say that what Ps-Hegesippus

⁵² Chaplin 2000: “Roughly half the people and events cited as *exempla* in Livy appear only once, and of the characters commonly thought of as typical *exempla*, many, such as Coriolanus or Appius Claudius the decemvir, appear only a few times; others, such as Lucretia, Mucius Scaevola, and Horatius, never feature as *exempla* after their initial appearance in the narrative” (49).

⁵³ See Chaplin 2015.

⁵⁴ Appian 2.8.1–6; Dio Cassius 6.21.24; 7.23.1,9–10; 7.24; Florus 1.7–8; cf. 1.17.4–5; Frontinus *Strat.* 4.1; Plutarch *Mor.* 12; Valerius Maximus 4.1.2; cf. 6.5.1a; 7 ext. 9. Camillus was still a stock Roman *exemplum* in the mid-fourth century; see *Historia Augusta* 10.21.1.

⁵⁵ In Camillus’ speech at Livy 5.52–54 we find the theme of correct posture toward the divine being decisive in affairs of state (cf. *De Excidio* 5.16.1), a clear comparison

does with Elisha, compared to his other *exempla*, illustrates a spectrum of exemplarity in practice that has correlates in Roman exemplarity. I do not mean to say that Ps-Hegesippus was demonstrably influenced by this legacy in his treatment of figures like Elisha (though this is undoubtedly the case); what I mean is that the practice of exemplarity among Roman authors and historians provides a model for understanding exemplarity in *De Excidio*.

THE OTHER ELISHAS OF LATE ANTIQUITY

Ps-Hegesippus' interest in Elisha in certain ways mirrors broader trends in Jewish and Christian antiquity. Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* 1.21) and *Sefer Olam Rabbah* (19) both took a special interest in the prophet as well, and thus likewise expanded upon his biblical career in the retelling.⁵⁶ The relationship between Elijah and Elisha mentioned at *De Excidio* 4.17.1 served as a model of student–master interaction for Jews and Christians alike, for example R. Simeon b. Yoḥai (b. *Berakhot* 7b) and Jerome (*The Life of St. Paul* 12).⁵⁷ And the legacy of Elisha's Jericho miracle lived on: The late second-century *Egerton Gospel* contains a story of Jesus performing a miracle at the Jordan River that adapts the details from Elisha's Jericho miracle at 2 Kgs 2:13 and was possibly influenced by Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* 4.460–64.⁵⁸ The touring “Pilgrim of Bordeaux” mentions Elisha's Jericho miracle as “genuine,” having seen the site at first hand.⁵⁹ If Ps-Hegesippus took a special interest in Elisha's legacy, he was not the only one. But, as with David, Elisha's reception in *De Excidio* is distinctive when viewed against his broader ancient reception.

One of the more prominent motifs of late ancient readings of Elisha concerns his ascetic, often monastic *modus vivendi*. Ancient Christians

between the present generation and the ancestors (cf. *De Excidio* 5.2.1), the idea of divine aid and its correct usage being a *remedium* for the public good (cf. *De Excidio* 4.17.1; 5.16.1), and the close association with the action of a particular figure with a particular locale (cf. *De Excidio* 4.17.1).

⁵⁶ Krauss 1892, 138–39.

⁵⁷ See respectively Kirschner 1984, 117 (with n101), and Rubenson 2000 (quote at 121n33). Cf. Jerome *The Life of Antony* 91.8.

⁵⁸ Zelyck 2016. The reconstruction of 2v.6–14 is remarkably similar to the Elisha episode: “Then Jesus, as he walked, stood on the bank of the Jordan river, and reaching out his hand, he took salt and scattered it upon the river. Then he poured out much water upon the ground. He prayed, and it was fulfilled before them; then it brought forth fruit.”

⁵⁹ Leyerle 2009, 122.

invested in such issues saw (figures like) Elisha refracted in John the Baptist and then in later ascetics and monks. Elisha's itinerant lifestyle, charisma, and manifest power made him a model for the exercise of such items among early Christians.⁶⁰ Theodoret capitalized upon Elisha's "power" to characterize ascetic-religious heroes in his *Religious History*.⁶¹ Some Christian authors made explicit Elisha's somatic rigor, as Ephrem the Syrian did in his *Hymns on the Nativity* (14.18) when he attributed Elisha's ability to raise the dead to his own "mortification of the flesh."⁶² Elisha is also among the cohort of biblical figures likened to Antony in the *Life of Antony* attributed to Athanasius.⁶³ Athanasius himself is likened to Elisha in spiritual power when he appears to have unwittingly blinded some enemies in an account recorded in Gelasius of Caesarea's *Church History* (cf. 2 Kgs 6:18–23).⁶⁴ Jerome cites Elisha often as a model of spiritual power and the contemplative life.⁶⁵ Within the ascetic craze of Christian late antiquity, Elisha typified that movement's ideals.

The Christian ascetic fixation upon Elisha has certain things in common with Elisha's typical appearance in rabbinic literature. There, consistent with the tone of that corpus, Elisha exemplifies (sometimes minute) aspects of religious, social, and cultural practice, while also retaining a reputation for (spiritual) power. Thus does Elisha appear in b. *Berakhot* 7b as a model of Torah learning, showing that serving (שמושה) a teacher/scholar (in his case Elijah) is better than learning (למודה) Torah from him.⁶⁶ In *Bava Metzia* 87a Elisha is said to mark the time at which

⁶⁰ Eucherius of Lyons *De laude Eremi* 20 suggests that Elisha's work and "school"/disciples existed in the desert. On Elisha in this work, see further (e.g.) 3 and 19 (remember that Eucherius knew *De Excidio*). Cf. John Cassian *Conferences* 14.4; 18.6 (which applies Heb 11:37–38 to Elijah and Elisha). In Ignatius of Antioch's *Letter to the Philadelphians* 4 (longer version) Elisha is a model of chastity. Cassian (*Institutes* 1.1.2) cites Elijah and Elisha as having initiated the monastic practice of girding the loins.

⁶¹ Krueger 1997, 394, 399, 410, 413n61.

⁶² Trans. McVey 1989, 144.

⁶³ Cameron 2000: the *Vita Antonii* subverts "pagan and classical models" to Antony, though he "discourses in classic fashion and is presented as a familiar type of late antique, though not necessarily Christian holy man," he is nevertheless "seen in the light of scriptural prototypes – Moses, Jacob, Elijah, Elisha, and Job" (75). Cf. *Vita Ant.* 7.12; 34.2–3.

⁶⁴ Gelasius *Hist. Eccl.* frag 27a 56 (named in the Greek, not the Latin). Wallraff, Stutz, and Marinides 2018, 248–49.

⁶⁵ See, e.g., Jerome *Ep.* 58.5 (*noster princeps Helias, noster Helisaeus, nostri duces filii prophetarum*, language clarifying the Christian appropriation of these figures as models); 18.4; 22.21.

⁶⁶ Cf. b. *Sotah* 13a.15.

sickness began to be healable (i.e., was not to result in certain death),⁶⁷ figuring there as the miracle-working prophet par excellence. In *Genesis Rabbah* 77, Elisha is even said to resemble God in his actions of remembering barren women (2 Kgs 4:13–17), blessing the destitute (2 Kgs 4:1–7), and “sweetening the bitter” (2 Kgs 4:40–41). But the rabbis, like some Christians, also used Elisha as a negative example at times.⁶⁸ Overall, however, rabbis saw Elisha as the ideal in many spheres, and their elevation of his example comports in tenor, if not always in content, with many ancient Christian treatments of the prophet. Less often do rabbinic treatments of Elisha resonate with his presentation in *De Excidio*, where his role is always deliverance from local or national disaster. The rabbis do remember Elisha in these contexts at times,⁶⁹ however, showing that Ps-Hegesippus’ portrayal of Elisha was not without its correlates in Jewish late antiquity.

A specifically Christian didactic purpose that Elisha served already in the fourth century was as a model for bishops.⁷⁰ Like holy men and martyrs, and not unlike rabbis, the figure of the bishop “like a new Elisha, the prophet-shepherd, endowed with foresight and unarmed ... did all that he could against the enemies of his Church and country.”⁷¹ As the bishop became an increasingly important political, religious, and civic figure in the fourth century and beyond,⁷² Elisha provided one type of biblical model for configuring a bishop’s proper role and authority. Ps-Hegesippus, not writing about bishops, did not present this side of Elisha, just as he neglects to characterize Elisha as a paradigm of asceticism.

In addition to all this, of course, one can find reference across the ancient Jewish and Christian tradition to aspects of Elisha’s biography and character not found among the few mentions Ps-Hegesippus makes of him. Theodoret cites the episode of Elisha’s cursing of young boys (so that they are attacked by bears) at 2 Kgs 2:24 as an example of the prophet’s

⁶⁷ “Until Elisha, one did not fall ill and then heal” (עד דאתא אלישע לא הוה דחליש). Cf. b. *Sanhedrin* 107b.17.

⁶⁸ In b. *Sanhedrin* 10b Elisha contradicts the teaching that one “drives sinners away with the left hand and draws them near with the right” by pushing away with both hands his servant Gehazi, interpreted as a total rejection of the other. Interestingly, Elisha’s example is paralleled to that of Yehoshua ben Perahya, “who pushed away Jesus the Nazarene with his two hands” (!). Cf. b. *Sotah* 47a; b. *Sanhedrin* 107b.5.

⁶⁹ *Ruth Rabbah* 1.4 (the famine in Samaria). In b. *Berakhot* 10a.26 Elisha models king-prophet interaction.

⁷⁰ Ruggini 2002.

⁷¹ Testa 2009, 537.

⁷² See Drake 2000.

intemperance.⁷³ Ps-Hegesippus does not mention this episode – though he narrates the episodes immediately before (in Jericho) and after (in Samaria) this scene – nor has he anything negative to say about the prophet. In one sense, we must expect that an author who mentions Elisha only several times will leave out much of what appears in the broader tradition. Ps-Hegesippus' portrait of the prophet is not just accidentally distinctive, but rather indicative of specific interests. This comports with Somenzi's comparison of *De Excidio*'s rendition of the miracle in Samaria with that of Ambrose, who recalls the same story in the *De Officiis* (3.118–23): Ps-Hegesippus' version is “più ampio, ricco di particolari ed anche stilisticamente più curato.”⁷⁴ Even compared to Christian contemporaries who used the same Elisha stories, Ps-Hegesippus seems to have produced longer, more tailored versions.

Ps-Hegesippus only ever presents Elisha as a national hero, a “powerful” and divinely sanctioned *propheta* for the people; he is averter of disaster, model of faith. Other late antique traditions use Elisha to model certain modes of everyday life and particular religious or social roles. For such ideas not to appear in *De Excidio* may appear unremarkable: Of course a historiographical text will not repeat the practical interests present in literature written by teachers, preachers, and others writing in a (different kind of) religious register; the contexts of such work determine their presentation of material. But this is precisely the point: The narrative contexts and rhetorical interests of *De Excidio* result in an overall portrayal of Elisha that is *not* the typical depiction of Elisha within late antiquity. It is one that has other interests, despite its overlap with the *communis opinio* in presenting Elisha as miracle-worker and prophet. Ps-Hegesippus' extensive exemplarity involving Elisha produces a model of national leadership that lacks the religious and ascetic trappings usually associated with Elisha among ancient Jews and Christians. In this way, not only does Elisha's appearance in *De Excidio* resemble the tradition of Roman exemplarity in its form – remember Camillus – but also, to an extent, in its tone. The Elisha of *De Excidio* betrays the Christian and the classical sides of Ps-Hegesippus' authorial personality.

* * *

Chiara Somenzi has noted Ps-Hegesippus' preference for the Books of Kingdoms and his tendency to draw from them “un gran numero de

⁷³ Theodoret *Historia Religiosa* 1.5.

⁷⁴ Somenzi 2009, 66.

exempla.”⁷⁵ Here we have seen that preference in action. Ps-Hegesippus betrays his interest in Elisha by using him to historicize the landscape of Judea (*De Excidio* 4.17.1), epitomize the ancient Hebrews’ enjoyment of divine blessing (4.17.1; 5.2.1), and show that faith-filled action is the best policy in war and diplomacy (5.2.1; 5.16.1). In so doing, we have seen a new aspect of *De Excidio*’s exemplarity: its capacity to associate *exempla* with numerous, extended traditional stories rather than a single, short one. On its face, this finding appears unexceptional. Of course ancient authors treated various *exempla* at various levels of intensity and breadth. But my point here is methodological, hermeneutic. The Elisha of *De Excidio* teaches us that not all *exempla* are created equal in that work. And this affects this book’s thesis. Not only are Hebrew heroes an important means by which Ps-Hegesippus articulates Jewish history; they also constitute a toolbelt of manifold capacity, and a monitor of where Ps-Hegesippus’ interests most especially lay within the biblical tradition and its exemplary figures and episodes. For Ps-Hegesippus, some *exempla* are useful because of one thing they did, others because of several or many; some *exempla* have utility at one place in the narrative, others at many; some *exempla* are mentioned in passing, others, like Elisha, occupy paragraphs. Just as in the Roman tradition, so in *De Excidio*: Not all *exempla* are created equal.

⁷⁵ Somenzi 2009, 72.

A Classical World of Biblical *Exempla*

Suicide and Patriotism in De Excidio 3.16–17

Chapters 6 and 7 closely examined two prominent biblical *exempla* in *De Excidio* to help map out some of the distinctive ways in which Ps-Hegesippus' biblical exemplarity works. Here and in Chapter 9, we retain this level of fine-grain analysis, but move the object of our examination from distinct figures to discrete passages. Just as David and Elisha represent two of the most important individual *exempla* in *De Excidio*, so the speeches dealt with in this chapter and Chapter 9 are by far the most important passages for understanding biblical *exempla* in *De Excidio*. The first of these sets of speeches comes at *De Excidio* 3.16–17.

De Excidio 3.16–17 marks an oratorical exchange between Josephus and his Jewish comrades at Jotapata. Josephus has been instrumental in leading the Jewish resistance against Rome from behind the city's walls, but the Romans have finally broken into the city (3.15.1).¹ All those resisting at first were slain, some willingly and some not; children and woman were spared; later, many were taken captive. The city has subsequently been burned and destroyed. Josephus, leader of the Jews still opposing Rome, hides “among the hot ashes of the city” in a cistern, with full cognizance of what is happening. He is being zealously sought out by the Romans (3.15.4). He is hiding with forty other men. When his hiding place becomes known, Josephus is summoned by Vespasian with the promise of safety (*a Vespasiano ad spem salutis uocari*). Josephus' partners in hiding surround him and “begin to assail him with speeches like this” (*circumfusi Iosephum talibus adoriebantur sermonibus*). Thus opens the debate at *De Excidio* 3.16.

¹ Cf. Josephus *War* 3.332–44.

What follows will be two speeches, one made by Josephus' Jewish comrades in arms (3.16) and one made in response by Josephus himself (3.17). In scripting these speeches, Ps-Hegesippus radically expands upon the original, shorter speeches found in Josephus' *Jewish War* (3.356–60 and 3.361–83). What we find in these speeches are two arguments, one supporting a never-surrender attitude and willingness to die for one's country, the other insisting upon the impiety of suicide and the need for temperate decision-making and devout action. These arguments unmistakably involve a series of ideas and terms firmly established within the world of Roman politics and ethics. At the same time, Ps-Hegesippus populates these arguments with a host of biblical *exempla*. I argue here that *De Excidio* 3.16–17 bears witness to a "classical world of biblical *exempla*," an infusion of biblical role models into a pair of historiographical speeches that revolve around concepts rooted most conspicuously in *Roman* discourse. This chapter shows that biblical figures provide Ps-Hegesippus with a tool to render the thoughts, words, and deeds of his narrative's Jewish actors within the distinctive cultural idiom of Roman exemplarity.

MODELS OF DEATH: NOBILITY IN SUICIDE AT *DE EXCIDIO* 3.16.1

The speech that Josephus' countrymen make to him has one basic theme: Death is better than surrender to the Romans. If Josephus cannot appreciate this, his comrades volunteer to make his decision for him. In the version of this scene in Josephus' *Jewish War* (3.350), Josephus' compatriots are more irate than in *De Excidio*, attempting to set fire to their cave hideout in their rage as they threaten Josephus. In the *War*, Josephus, far more pious than in *De Excidio*, muses over prophecy and Scripture and says a prayer to the deity about the situation (3.352–54) before deciding to surrender (3.355). In response (3.355–60), Josephus' comrades supplement their threat of death – whether as general of or traitor to the Jews, Josephus' choice – with a short speech blaming "Rome's fortune" (ἡ Ῥωμαίων τύχη) for deceiving Josephus and citing his exhortations to others to die for liberty (ἐλευθερία) as evidence of a "false reputation for virtue (ἀνδρεία)." ² In *De Excidio*, the same sentiments are expressed, but with help from a collection of *exempla* from Hebrew antiquity, something that appears nowhere in Josephus' version.

Though it contains many of the same ideas, the speech of Josephus' comrades at *De Excidio* 3.16.1 is different from the speech as found in Josephus' *War*. In *De Excidio* they say:

² LCL 487: 104.

“Now is the greater downfall of the Jewish name felt, now are the ashes more repulsive, which conceal and hide the custom of our most illustrious stock and undermine all decency, when Josephus is appointed as a captive to be reserved for the victory procession. What are the desires behind such unremitting enticements suddenly made by the enemy? Behind voluntary guarantees of safety? They have not spared the lives of others who asked for it: yet Josephus is summoned, Josephus is invited to live. Obviously they are afraid lest they forfeit their triumphal procession, lest they fail to obtain him whom Rome would see a captive, whom Vespasian would drive chained before his chariot.

Do you wish to be reserved for such mockery? For on what basis will they hold a triumph, if a leader of those over whom a triumph is made is lacking? Or what kind of triumph is it, if friendship is offered to those conquered? Believe it not, Josephus. Life is offered to you, but things worse than death are being prepared for you. Roman arms may have conquered you, but let not deceitfulness captivate you. Their gifts are more harmful than wounds, for the former threaten captivity, but the latter preserve liberty.

Will you be bowed down, Josephus, and, broken by some softness of spirit, do you wish to be one who outlives your country? Where is the teaching of Moses, who asked that he might be erased from the heavenly book, lest he outlive the people of the Lord? Where is Aaron, who stood in the middle between the living and the dead, lest death consume the living people with a savage contagion?

Where is the spirit of King Saul and Jonathan, devoted to the fatherland, and that death assumed bravely on behalf of the citizens and sought for the sake of glory? The son challenged the father by his example, the father did not abandon his son when faced with the prospect of death. He [Saul], while it was in his power to remain alive, preferred to be killed rather than triumphed over by the enemy. He commanded his armor-bearer, saying: ‘Strike me down, lest these uncircumcised men come and strike me and make sport of me.’ Because his armor-bearer was terrified, he transfixed himself on this sword, in a manner worthy of one whom David would vindicate by the prophetic spirit—because a man of Amalekite race had boasted falsely about his death and thought to diminish the glory of a man who had removed himself from the foreigner [or enemy], so that he falsely claimed that Saul had been killed by him—for he was still worthy whom the prophet had so praised, saying: ‘Saul and Jonathan, most beautiful and beloved of all, they were inseparable in their life and were not separated in death, they were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.’

And David himself, when he saw the people struck by the angel, willed that the heavenly vengeance be turned toward himself, lest he be saved while the people perished. Finally, where is the divine law, whose interpreter you always were, which promises to the righteous perpetual immortality in place of this brief life? Where is the God of the Hebrews, who teaches the righteous to have contempt of death, even that they ought to flee this earthbound habitation, to return to the celestial realm, to that place of paradise, where God sanctifies pious souls?

Now at last do you desire to live, Josephus, when it is not becoming, nay, when it is not lawful, nor indeed, what is more important, when it is not proper? And I dare say that you desire to grasp at that light of servitude that rests in another’s

power? So that the Romans can rip it away whenever they so desire, can truck you off to the dungeons of prison when they want to? You hope to flee from here with the result that you will not be allowed to die? And with what shame will you go over to them, away from those whom you have persuaded to die on behalf of the [our] country?

What excuse will you have that you have remained for so long? They wait to see what you might do, and now they are certainly saying: ‘Why does Josephus, who ought to have come already, delay? Why does he follow so late? Why does he refuse to imitate his disciples, whom he exhorted to die on behalf of liberty?’ Are we really to announce [to them] that you, an advocate of liberty, have chosen to be a slave, that you enslave yourself to the Romans, that you prefer captivity to liberty? But if it is the case that you desire to live, how are you going to obtain this from those against whom you have so often fought?

How will they look at you, with what kind of eyes, with what kind of dispositions? How will you want to live with masters who have been enraged, even if it be allowed? Or who will not believe him to have been a traitor to his country, when he sees the one to whom the reward for betrayal is paid? Choose that which you prefer.

One of two things must occur: your life will either become the reward of betrayal or the torment of slavery.” Saying these things they stretched out their swords, adding: “If you are content to die, we will provide this as a service to a friend; if you refuse, we will exact it as punishment of a traitor.”

De Excidio 3.16.1³

Josephus’ fellows begin with an exasperated complaint that is similar to, though not the same as, the opening of the speech in the *Jewish War* (3.356–57). His fellows are incredulous that he would capitulate to the Romans, which promises captivity and humiliation worse than death. Death, at least, would preserve (the dignity of) *libertas*. Here Josephus’ Jewish companions tap into a Roman idea: namely, the nobility of suicide in certain situations.⁴

Josephus’ fellows see in him a “softness of spirit” (*animi mollitia*) given that he wishes to outlive his country (*patria*).⁵ With this, Ps-Hegesippus has his speakers launch into their barrage of exemplary argumentation. Their tack involves a series of intermixed rhetorical questions and statements, striking a deliberative forensic balance, driving home the point that death on behalf of country is the noble, the right, the only course available. They begin with Moses, whose “teaching” (*doctrina*) should, they aver, make Josephus’ decision an easy one. Moses preferred to have

³ CSEL 66.1: 210–12.

⁴ Hill 2004, 152, 157, 192, 205, 214; Grisé 1982; Van Hooff 1990.

⁵ Cf. Seneca *De Ira* 3.14.3 (LCL 214: 290–91) on the idea of being “a bonds slave in spirit even more than in station” (*animo magis quam condicione mancipium*), in a passage where divine disapproval is also invoked.

his own name be blotted out of the “heavenly book” (*liber caelesti*) – a high cost, to be sure – than to survive God’s people (*plebs domini*).⁶ Should not Josephus do the same? Aaron stood between the living and the dead to protect the people of Israel from a savage contagion (Num 16:48).⁷ Is Josephus unwilling to make the same sacrifice? Saul and Jonathan stand at the pinnacle of this exemplary crescendo: They died together in battle for their country. Does Josephus intend to fall short of their example? Josephus’ comrades add to this the example of David, recalling his sacrifice after the census dilemma (2 Sam 24//1 Chr 21). Here is one more leader who gave himself up to save his people. Surely Josephus aspires to this ideal.

This opening rhetorical foray forefronts several things about Ps-Hegesippus’ deployment of *exempla* in this speech. First, the characters and scenes mentioned seem to be among Ps-Hegesippus’ favorites: Moses, Aaron, and David, for example, are somewhat of a stock bunch, appearing together again at *De Excidio* 5.2.1. In both cases Ps-Hegesippus strings together a thematic sequence of *exempla* by referencing biblical scenes with shared motifs. Further, and more significantly, the opening sequence of 3.16.1 self-consciously couches its use of *exempla* in quintessentially Roman terms. The reader is already clued into this by the earliest part of the speech, which digresses ad nauseam over the interwoven themes of *Roma*, *captiuitas*, *triumphi*, *pompa*, *amicitia*, *fraudentia*, *patria*.⁸ Ps-Hegesippus sounds a lot like Livy. When *exempla* come into play, another set of ideas familiar to Roman patriotism and historiography emerges: *deuotus patriae*,⁹ *mors pro ciuibus*, and the ideas of *fortitudo* and a patriotic death sought *fortiter* and

⁶ Exod 32:32; Deut 9:14. God’s “book” and the blotting of names out of it (and writing them into it) was a trope in the Hebrew Bible: Exod 17:14; 32:33; cf. the related “blotting out” of “names”/people in Gen 6:7; 7:4, 23; Exod 23:23; Deut 25:6, 19; 29:20; Judg 21:17; 2 Kgs 14:27; Ps 9:5; 109:13; Ezek 32:7; cf. Job 19:23. The “book of life” per se became a Christian notion (Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27) based on Ps 69:28 (“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous”).

⁷ See Bay 2021b, 160–64.

⁸ On the Roman *triumphus*, see Versnel 1970; Gibbon 1796. On *amicitia* as a term of patronage (and thus, power) rather than friendship: Williams 2012, 47–48.

⁹ In terms of Sallustian historiography, “a *devotio* is an act whereby a leader vows his own life, together with the life of his enemies, to the gods of the Underworld, in exchange for the safety or security of his people”; Rosenblitt 2011, 402. While lacking this theological framework, the idea of patriotic suicide as put forth in *De Excidio* 3.16 is effectively the same idea (and Stover and Woudhuysen 2022 argue that *De Excidio* is indeed Sallustian historiography).

gloriose.¹⁰ Such Latin terms comprise the fiber of the Roman discourse on bravery, patriotic death, and nationalism. When biblical *exempla* emerge in *De Excidio* 3.16.1, they do so within some of the defining terminology of *Romanitas*. The terms with which Josephus' Jewish comrades address him are fundamentally Roman terms, most closely associated with the Roman world.

With Jonathan, Saul, and David, the sally of rhetorical interrogatives gives way to a series of suggestive indicatives. But the rhetorical questions return. After zooming in on these *exempla*, Josephus' interlocutors zoom out and make their argument, once again, in broader terms, which the previously cited *exempla* instantiate. In this part of the speech these Jewish zealots pull out all the stops: The *lex diuina*, the *deus Hebraeorum*, and the perspective offered by *paradisus* and the promises of the afterlife are all brought forward to convince Josephus that he cannot surrender to the Romans. He should die first. And the questioning does not let up. If anything, it becomes more aggressive. Josephus' accusers chastise his desire to live when this is neither becoming nor allowable nor decent (*non oportet ... nec licet ... non decet*). They argue that Josephus' capitulation would result in shame (*pudor*) before those he himself had persuaded to die on behalf of their country (*pro patria mori*).¹¹ Playing on Josephus' previous leadership role and apparent patriotic zeal (to the point of being willing to die), his fellow Jews suggest that it is ironic for him to refuse to imitate his own disciples, whom he himself talked into dying on behalf of liberty (*discipulos suos quibus pro libertate moriendum suasit*; cf. Josephus *War* 3.358). Even if the Roman emperor to whom Josephus would capitulate is an *adsertor libertatis* (advocate of liberty), Josephus is still choosing *mancipium* to the Romans, preferring *captiuitas* to *libertas*.¹²

Finally, Josephus' comrades assert bluntly that his surrender will make him a traitor to his country (*proditor patriae*) and that everyone will see the price paid him for his treachery (*proditio*).¹³ Josephus' options, as his countrymen present them, are bleak: His life will comprise either the cost of treachery (*praemium prodicionis*) or the punishment of slavery

¹⁰ The values and emotional vocabulary of ancient Romans were in large part forged within the "warrior culture" of the Republic, comprising a social web of honor, status, and tradition: Barton 2001.

¹¹ A Roman idea: Speidel 2010.

¹² Roller 2001, 227–33; Brunt 1988, 281–350; on the malleability of the term, see Syme 1939, 155.

¹³ *Proditio* and *perfidia* are constants in *De Excidio* and Roman military thought: Wheeler 1988, 90 (n209); 24n64, 88–90.

(*servitutis supplicium*).¹⁴ But in fact, Josephus has no choice: His comrades move forward, swords drawn, to kill him, either as a service to a friend (*ministerium amici*) or punishment to a traitor (*ultio proditi*).¹⁵

The language of shame, honor, and decency; the theme of death for country; the idea of imitation in bravery; the fixation upon *libertas* as absolutely preferable to *captivitas*, *servitium*, *mancipium*;¹⁶ the manifest disgust of treachery – these are all part of the warp and woof of Roman discourse on war, politics, ethics and morality, virtue, identity, nationality. They are too well known in this capacity to merit belaboring the point. They are also, of course, quite familiar to Jewish tradition, particularly Hellenistic Judaism, with Josephus the prime example. Nor is the (problematic) notion of the valorization of death and/or suicide totally foreign to the Jewish Scriptures themselves, as a new book by Paul Cho discusses.¹⁷ But they are most stereotypically Roman, and we should add that most of these ideas are only occasionally and incidentally Christian.¹⁸ If Christian martyrology or monasticism picks up and transvalues these concepts and language, it does so in a register quite different from what we find in *De Excidio*. Ps-Hegesippus is writing what he considers (and what seems to be) a realistic speech recounting a serious wartime debate within one camp of a battle on the precipice of an important decision. This colors the narrative, and retroactively colors the *exempla* he employs. He has introduced the *exempla* he has for a reason that is self-evident and unmistakable: These five Hebrew heroes all showed themselves willing to die on behalf of their *patria*. Two did.

¹⁴ Cf. Livy 3.18.10, where the price paid (*sumptum supplicium*) by enemy soldiers refers to their execution.

¹⁵ Just as in the last line of the speech in Josephus *War* 3.360.

¹⁶ Bleicken, 1972, 52–54. On *libertas* in *De Excidio*: Bay 2018, 284–88, and 68, 115–27, 207–208, 250–115, 253. For Roman slavery/servitude language: Roller 2001, 217 *et alibi*.

¹⁷ Cho 2022. My thanks to Blake Jurgens for pointing me to this forthcoming work. For a problematization of the easy notion that Judaism and/or Christianity simply rejected suicide in every case, see Droge and Tabor 1992.

¹⁸ The Christian treatment of these issues tends to exude so radical a reorientation that an issue cannot always be recognized as the same thing. For example, the Christian appropriation of the Roman discourse on slavery, discussed in this chapter and Chapter 9, was often (though not always) retooled in terms of a Christian moral understanding of the individual, society, and God. Thus Augustine's co-opting of slavery to foster a discourse of "free slavery" (*libera servitus*), the paradoxical coexistence of freedom and servitude within the human life lived for God; see de Wet 2018, 20, 58, 118. However, concerning suicide, one can argue that no single "Christian" perspective predominated before the age of Augustine, as argued by Droge and Tabor 1992.

The speech that Ps-Hegesippus constructs for Josephus' fellow Jewish fighters at Jotapata resonates loud and clear with the values and language most familiar from Roman historiography and political discourse. Such ideas were not necessarily alien to Jewish or early Christian tradition – but they were most quintessentially Roman. Thus, hues of Roman exemplarity color the biblical exemplarity of Ps-Hegesippus. A brief, though by no means comprehensive, picture of Ps-Hegesippus' singularity in presenting these biblical figures this way can be gained by a search in Brepols' *Library of Latin Texts*. Such a survey shows, for example, that very few authors before Ps-Hegesippus spoke of Abraham, Moses, Saul, Jonathan, and/or David in terms of *libertas*, though Ambrose, an author somehow very closely associated with Ps-Hegesippus (we do not know how), does.¹⁹

Christian authors did, of course, discuss these and other of their Old Testament figures in terms of servitude and slavery, something unavoidable given the prominence of slaves and slavery in biblical narrative, law, and metaphor.²⁰ But I can find no comparably early examples of Christian authors deploying such figures along with, for instance, *seruitus* or its cognates in discussing the theme present in *De Excidio* 3.16–17: whether or not to submit military to an enemy. The simple fact is that early Christian literature leaves us little evidence that Christians before and even during the fourth and fifth centuries talked, thought, or cared much about such things. If and when they did so, it was unlikely to have been in their capacities as *Christians*. It was Romans, who could of course also be Christians, who traded in the Latin terminology mentioned to discuss issues like martial virtues, the political ethics of patriotism, and how to die well in

¹⁹ Before Rufinus, only Ambrose associates *libertas* with Abraham. Other than Ambrose, who speaks of Moses vis-à-vis *libertas* with some frequency, only Cyprian of Carthage does so as early as *De Excidio* in Latin (*Ad Fortunatum* 7). Both Abraham and Moses are discussed in terms of *libertas* in various works of Rufinus. Chronologically, Ps-Hegesippus appears to be the first author to connect David with *libertas* (at *De Excidio* 5.2.). No comparatively early Latin authors discuss Saul or Jonathan in such terms, but some later authors do, like Bede, who knew *De Excidio* at any rate.

²⁰ E.g., Novatian's *De Trinitate* 8.2, which includes amid a sweeping theological survey of God's mighty and salvific deeds in history: "[God] preserved the righteous Noah from the dangers of the flood on account of the merit of his innocence and of his faith, he transported Enoch, he brought Abraham into a pact of friendship, he protected Isaac, he strengthened Jacob, he put forth Moses as a leader to the people, he ripped the groaning sons of Israel free from the yoke of slavery, he wrote the law, he led the posterity of the fathers into the land of promise" (*noe iustissimum de diluuii periculis pro merito innocentiae fideique serauit, enoch transtulit, in amicitiae societatem abraham allegit, isaac protexit, iacob auxit, moysen ducem populo praefecit, ingemiscentes filios israel e iugo seruitutis eripuit, legem scripsit, patrum sobolem in terram repromissionis induxit*).

battle.²¹ When Christians borrowed the themes and language of such discourses, they may have been using Latin, but they were not speaking the same language. When a scholar like Michael Gaddis says that “[a]thletic and military metaphors pervaded early Christian literature,” he is talking about literature that deals with the early Christian heroes of martyrdom and asceticism: “the martyrs were champions of God, soldiers of Christ.”²² While one cannot deny some conceptual overlap, this kind of discourse exudes a night-and-day difference from patriotic discussions of battle-field bravado. The latter is not prominent in early Christian literature. For Ps-Hegesippus to deal with it as he does at *De Excidio* 3.16.1 – in a historiographical speech among soldiers – makes him unique. Ps-Hegesippus shows that by the late fourth century Christians could and did think and talk about war in a demonstrably Roman way, devoid of Christian moral and theological trappings.²³ While a Christian talking about Jews, Ps-Hegesippus was also a Roman historian; and he wrote like one.

SURRENDER, NOT SUICIDE: THE ETHICS OF SURVIVAL AT *DE EXCIDIO* 3.17.1

Josephus’ response to the arguments, accusations, and threats of his countrymen is robust. Well over three times as long as the speech of his comrades, Josephus’ response carries greater nuance and unveils a broader, deeper interface with biblical *exempla* than his interlocutors.²⁴ The earlier Greek version of this speech (*War* 3.362–82) is likewise long and intricate.²⁵ Ps-Hegesippus, whose version of the speech departs significantly from Josephus’ own, plays on the themes presented by his source: namely, the nobility versus cowardice of death versus surrender and the moral and theological implications of

²¹ For the idea that there were two sides to the story of early Christian thinking on war and military service, see Swift 1983. The earlier consensus that Christians were always pacifists is problematized by Helgeland, Daly, and Burns 1985.

²² Gaddis 2005, 24. See further Iosif 2013; Kalantzis 2012; Shean 2010.

²³ Which is not to say these did not exist, even loom large, in a given author’s mind. Cadoux 1919 suggested that for ancient Christians “an uncritical view of the Old Testament revelation tended to embarrass and corrupt the pure Christian instinct on the subject of war” (ix), implying that the heroes of the Hebrew Bible were an interpretive problem for ancient (and modern) Christian thinkers. Cadoux was influenced in this by an immediately post-World War I context. Earlier, von Harnack 1982 [1905] had taken umbrage at early Christian martial metaphors in, e.g., Paul, Ignatius, and Cyprian, and was incensed that the Catholic Church had built its authority upon these bulwarks.

²⁴ The speech of 3.16.1 has 528 words compared to 1,714 in Josephus’ speech of 3.17.1.

²⁵ Cf. Feldman 1984, 524–27; Kottek 1994, 171–80; Price 2007, 13–19.

suicide.²⁶ In Ps-Hegesippus' version, Josephus, like his interlocutors, begins with a long series of rhetorical questions: Who would want to be a survivor of so much death (*esse tantae mortis superstes*) and heir to such pain (*heres doloris*)? Who would *not* want his or her *anima* to be released (*absolui*) "from this body of death" (*ex isto corpore mortis*)?²⁷ If only it were allowed (*liceat*). But it is not. From the onset, then, Josephus precipitates his basic argument in the speech of *De Excidio* 3.17 – suicide is wrong:

To this Josephus replied: "And who would desire to be a survivor of so much death? Who would choose to be heir to anguish? Who would not want his soul to be set free from this body of death, if it were allowed? But it is not allowed to set free except to the one who has done the binding. The soul is conjoined to the body by a bond of nature. Who is the author[ity] of nature except the omnipotent God? Who would dare to divide this our soul and body and thus destroy a companionship which is pleasing to God? If someone should, without the permission of his lord, remove the chains placed on his hands by his master's command, will he not be condemned as having injured his master with a serious injustice?"

We are God's possession, we owe [our] service to God; as servants we expect commands, as those chained we retain our chains, as those who have been entrusted we guard our good deposit. We should not refuse the gift of this life which he has given to us, we ought not decline the heavenly gift. If you reject those things given by men, you are insulting: how much more ought we to preserve what we have accepted from our God? Just as we have accepted from him what we are, so also we ought to exist for his sake so long as he desires. For either one is the act of an ungrateful person, either to depart more quickly than he desires or to live longer than the one who himself gave life has willed.

Do you think that Abraham so hastened long ago? Do you think that Moses ascended Abarim before it was said to him, 'ascend onto Mt. Abarim'? Rather, it was said to him, 'ascend,' and [then] he ascended, and died. Like a good servant he awaited the command of his lord. It was Job himself who had said: 'Let that day perish on which I was born,' yet beset with wounds and sufferings he did not break the chains of this life, but asked that he might be set free, saying: 'why is it that light is given amidst bitterness, and life to suffering souls?' And certainly he praises death when he states: 'death is rest to a man;' nevertheless he did not seize it but requested it, as it is written: 'I shake through all my limbs, and because I am irreverent, why am I not dead? Why did I not fall from my mother's belly into the grave? Is not my lifetime brief? Send me away to rest a little.'

And another saint says: 'Release my soul from prison.' He petitions to leave, he asks to be liberated of this body as from a prison. For none of the saints takes this for himself, no one snatches [his own life] prematurely. If 'to die is gain,' then it is robbery to seize it before it is expected, if 'to live is good,' it is sacrilege to refuse it before it is demanded back.

²⁶ van Henten 2007; Newell 1989.

²⁷ Borrowing the language of Rom 7:24: "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death (ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου/*de corpore mortis huius*)?"

But you all think it a glorious thing to die in battle. I do not deny that it is good to die for one's country, that it is good to die on behalf of one's fellow citizens in battle. But I offer my throat by the law of battle, if the enemy should find it, if the Romans would bury their blade [in it], those to whom God has given victory over us, and to whom God has handed us over in judgment because of our sins. Neither is this more appealing to me because they offer to spare me.

Oh that they would deceive me! Either I will acquire this gain because they have feared me enough to deceive me thus, or I will wreak vengeance on them because they have broken faith. But I prefer to die by their deceptiveness than by my own. It is my crime if I raise my hand against myself; if the enemy does so, it is a favor. Therefore, they would be able to bestow this benefit upon me by killing me, should they desire to give it: for, since they have plundered, they have it in their power to kill a captive. But you promise me the service of your hand. In fact, we have been missing a murderer, that we might perish by our own wickedness. I am unwilling to perish by your wicked deed or by my own, and what is more than my own, I am unwilling to perish by a mutual sin—for instance, that each of us turn his hands upon himself, to pay the price of a substitute death, so that he would owe an evil deed not only to himself, whoever he may be, but also to the blood of another.

A real example emerges in King Saul, certainly, of him who was both summoned as king against the divine will and who earned the enmity of God, whence, while he still lived he received his successor. An excellent example of a man to whom the favor of God was wanting. And therefore he desired to die, because he had hitherto not been able to live. Yet this same man desired that his comrade should kill him, but the latter thought it a crime and thus refused to offer this assistance. Therefore not the use of counsel but the absence of assistance made it so that he turned his sword against himself. If he did it out of fear, lest he make himself a laughingstock, then how do you praise what comes from fear? If he was not afraid, then why did he elect another [to do it] at first? I fear neither that the Romans will laugh at me nor that they will deceive me. Only Saul thus killed himself, not Jonathan, nor anyone else in our scriptures. And why marvel that he was able to kill himself who was even able to kill his own son?

Aaron stood between the living and the dead, but this was an act of virtue and not of temerity. For he did not bring death upon himself, but neither did he fear death, who repulsed it with his body and was in all things an obstacle to the serpent. Certainly I am not Aaron, but I am not inferior to him—Look! I hold out my hands, let them strike them as they will. If I am capable of fearing their hands, then I am worthy to perish by my own hands. If they spare an adversary, why may I not spare myself? If you ask why they would want to spare me: even among the enemy they admire virtue. For so great is the esteem for virtue, that it often takes delight even in an enemy.

For you yourselves have come to know how much destruction I have wrought upon the Romans, by what means I held off the conquerors of every race from destroying the city of Jerusalem by means of a long-lasting blockade at the insignificant town of Jotapata. Shortly thereafter I cast the lot for condemnation for the entire war. The others learned from my test to choose peace. Perhaps we are reserved for this, that others might not be deterred, but incentivized.

But you assert that it is pleasant to die on behalf of liberty. And who denies that? But still it is sweet to live with liberty. For the one who offers friendship promises liberty. But if he does bring on slavery, then the choice to die will

undoubtedly be more opportune, if it shall be appropriate to die. But right now they are offering life, they prefer not to kill. But both are timid, he who is not willing to die when it is becoming and he who wants to when it is not becoming.

For who does not know that it is a feminine freedom and a female fear to want to die so as not to be killed? For trembling women, where they have perceived some danger to be approaching them, tend to throw themselves down headlong. For meager spirits are not able to endure the burden of terror and the dread of death. But the unyielding man, who fears not matters at hand and reflects upon things to come, he does not know how to be anxious and in him there is no fear. For it has been written that the souls of the effeminate will hunger, [souls] which are hungry because they have not the nourishment of virtue, and for that reason they hasten toward death before it is time. For, not yet filled with the food of spiritual grace, he is asking for violence against himself, since it is written that 'the mouth of the imprudent invites death.'

And again Scripture says: 'and he who does not care for himself in his tasks is the brother of him who destroys himself.' Therefore whoever strikes himself down is condemned. For what goes so far against the law of nature? Or, furthermore, against the nature of all animals? It has been naturally instilled into whatever animals you can name, however wild and undomesticated they may be, to love themselves. For it is a powerful law of nature to desire to live and not to bring death upon oneself. Finally, not even if they wanted to could every species of animal be armed against itself with iron. Men may have invented a hideous snare of death—wild animals know it not. But bites are the arms of wild animals, teeth are their swords. Yet when has anyone ever heard of some wild animal having deprived itself of a limb by its own bite? They deploy the weapons of their jaws against others, their kisses to themselves.

So also for us, what is as sweet as life, what is as inimical as death? For the one who would protect his life is its defender, the one who would attempt to seek death its ambusher. Therefore do we wish to bring upon ourselves that for which we utter curses against others when they seek to do it to us? And that which we force upon others as a punishment, do we seek this for ourselves as a gift? And we prosecute a captain if he should steer a ship commissioned to him against a rock—do we extinguish with iron the captaincy of our body, commissioned to us, and assent to intentional shipwreck?

But you object that death is waiting for me once I will have been led into the power of the enemy. For what do I profit if I bring upon myself this thing which I fear from the enemy, since it may happen that what you are urging me to do the enemy may not do? This is such a case, and if the captain beholds the coming storm, for the purpose of avoiding the storm he will plunge his ship into the waves. But because the adversary is going to exact more severe punishments, for this reason you think to anticipate him? Or because we reckon it expedient that we ourselves wield iron upon ourselves? But at this point it is a refuge of feebleness, not a trophy of virtue, to lunge at that which is gained from punishments [i.e., death]. Do we therefore adhere to this, which carries neither the appearance of fortitude nor the profit of utility? But why would I add [to this] that the sacredness of my deposit be violated?

The omnipotent God has given us the ultimate treasure, enclosed in this vessel of clay, and he has committed to us the sealed [container] for guarding, until it may please him to demand it back. Is it not a crime in either case, either to return the deposit when not requested by the one who gave it or to refuse the request?

If the violation of a human deposit carries the price of reproach, how much more the violation of God's deposit?

The soul is the deposit of God in this body, a soul which should not be capable of its own death. For it is not bound by any chain of death, but it appears to effect death when it is loosed from the body and is severed from the companion assigned to it. Therefore why would we seek death before the deposit is sought and return our soul as if it were useless to us and shut it out of our abode and return our body to the earth without its elegance and beauty? Why are we not awaiting the command to depart from here?

A soldier awaits an order, a slave a command. If either of these departs without an injunction, the one is a deserter, the other a fugitive. Whoever flees from a man is liable to punishment, even if he should flee an unjust master. Are we then able, in fleeing the greatest of all masters, not to be bound by the disgrace of impiety? Even still has this escaped our attention, that God placed an angel on the perimeter around those who fear him? This, therefore, is the one who will prevent [entry] unless he should receive an injunction. No injunction, no entrance pass. And how shall we make it through without an entrance pass? Who will receive us within that pristine and hidden location? Who will admit us into that fellowship of holy souls?

Adam hid, because he transgressed the injunction of God; he was shut out of Paradise, because he did not keep his charge. It was said to him, 'Adam, where are you?' as if to someone who had fled, as if to someone whose presence was not with God. Will it not also be said to me, 'where are you, who have come before I gave you my injunction, whom I have not yet released from the bonds of nature? Take him to the outer shadows, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

We have received these prohibitions not only in the customs of men but even in their laws. For some command them to be thrown out unburied who bring out iron against themselves. For it is fitting that those who did not await the command of their father should be deprived a burial-place in the ground, in the same manner as [they would be deprived] the bosom of their mother. Others cut off the right hand of the deceased, so that the one who waged war with raging insanity against his own body be separated from the members of his body. But either traitors or murderers of parents bear this sacrilegious end; those who did not recognize their True Father or know themselves. For that reason they are either totally prohibited from being buried or they are not buried intact. And it is not paradise that receives their souls, but the shades of the nether regions and savage punishments.

To me as I am thinking over these things, although everything may have been taken away—albeit only those things which pertain to fear and dread—let me not bring upon myself what the enemy was not able to bring and rip away those things which pertain to paradise, which the Roman has not yet been able to rip away—certainly he would be able to hasten it, but he would not be able to take it away—which alone I impatiently desire. For no other longing of this life holds me, in which neither with fellow citizens nor with enemies do I take hold of that which may delight. These have denied me peace, those have snatched away my country. Amidst so many evils, what pleasantness can remain in this life?

Now you, omnipotent father, who are author and surveyor of nature, impart an honorable departure, you, break this natural chain, return my soul to its secret place. The nation may be extinguished, justice removed, freedom broken, yet I will not transgress your law so as to die unbidden. I await, that you may command; I expect

you to release one who desires it. You have many executors—I await a command from you, and help from an executor.

It is a good thing to die, but if I die it will be as a Hebrew, not as a brigand, not as a murderer, not as an enemy. So be it that I have been conquered in war; yet I will remain what I was born, so as not to desert the inheritance of father Abraham. I will not enter into the enemy's number so as to become my own assassin. I am able to offer myself to the enemy to be struck without the loss of piety; I am not able to turn my own hands into an enemy against me without sin. But is it not truly a fearful thing, if it not be allowed to us to live according to the law? But truly now, there is great liberty for those to whom it is not given to die according to the law."

De Excidio 3.17.1²⁸

Josephus' argument is theologically and biblically based, phrased initially in a kind of philosophical logic.²⁹ Subject matter and Josephus' framing of it determine which *exempla* appear.

In general, Ps-Hegesippus' version of this speech mirrors that of Josephus' *Jewish War*. The argument revolves around *Deus et natura, anima et corpus*, a discourse into which are inserted the binaries of *dominus et possessio* and *seruitium et imperium*. Ps-Hegesippus' creative license appears, once again, in his insertion of a number of apt *exempla* into Josephus' argument.

The first two *exempla* Josephus deals with in *De Excidio* 3.17.1 are Judaism's two most famous personalities: Abraham and Moses. Josephus asks his comrades if they think that Abraham hastened to die or that Moses ascended Mt. Abarim before God told him to.³⁰ Of course they didn't. Both models, Josephus maintains, awaited the divinely ordained moment of death. Next Josephus turns to Job. What Josephus cites Job as saying constitutes one of the longer, albeit not unbroken, biblical quotations in all of *De Excidio*. Job's saying begins with the first words Job spoke after the ordeal described in Job 1–2: "Let that day perish on which I was born" (Job 3:3). Josephus explains that Job "did not break the chains of this life" even while beset with wounds and suffering. Rather, he *asked* that he might be set free (*sed ut liberaretur rogabat*); that is, be allowed to die. Ps-Hegesippus, through Josephus, interprets Job 3:20 – in his words, "why is life given in the midst of suffering, and light to souls in the midst of troubles?"³¹ – as a kind of indirect request for death.

²⁸ CSEL 66.1: 212–19.

²⁹ Cf. Josephus *War* 3.362.

³⁰ See Gen 25:8; Deut 32:48–50; 34:1–6; cf. *Historia Augusta* 25.2.4.

³¹ Ps-Hegesippus is close to the LXX: ἵνα τί γὰρ δέδοται τοῖς ἐν πικρίᾳ φῶς, ζωὴ δὲ ταῖς ἐν ὀδύναϊς ψυχαῖς? Still, he shares core vocabulary with the Vulgate: *quare data est misero lux et vita his qui in amaritudine animae sunt?*

More than that, Josephus allows that Job even “praised death” (*laudabat ... mortem*) when he stated that “death is rest to a man” (*mors uiro requies*). This latter statement is a direct quote from Greek Job 3:23a.³² Josephus continues: Again, Job did not seize (*non praeripiebat*) death, but requested it (*postulabat*), “as it is written” (*ut scriptum est*).

This scriptural citation introduces a longer portion of soliloquy, with commentary, from the Book of Job and then from a Psalm. Here Ps-Hegesippus’ creative editorial hand is at work, stringing together into one coherent series quotations from Job 9:28a, 9:29, 10:19b, and 10:20.³³ These statements epitomize the plight of Job, whom Josephus uses to front the moral that “asking [permission from God] to die” is one thing, pursuing it oneself via suicide another. The “other holy man” (*alius sanctus*) whom Ps-Hegesippus has Josephus recall to drive home the same point is David at Ps 141:8a, though he is here unnamed.³⁴ Josephus capitalizes upon David’s request that his *anima* be released from prison (*custodia*) to ask what such a request implies: To be liberated (*liberari*) *ex hoc corpore* is to be liberated “as if from some prison” (*quasi de quodam liberari carcere*). This Platonic idea was already present in the *Jewish War*.³⁵ Perhaps for this reason Ps-Hegesippus considered it particularly appropriate to put on Josephus’ lips in his anti-suicide speech at Jotapata.

The four *exempla* first introduced in *De Excidio* 3.17 – Abraham, Moses, Job, and the unnamed David – are all “on message” in that they all provide examples of the right way to die: wait for a natural – that is, God-ordained – death. But these exemplars also come at the subject from different angles. While the heroes of the Pentateuch illustrate the ideal

³² Job 3:23a: θάνατος ἀνδρὶ ἀνάπαυμα (Ps-Hegesippus even follows the word order; the Vulgate follows the Hebrew, which does not contain this statement); cf. Job 3:13 (lamenting that he did not die at birth): “Now I would have lain down quiet (ἡσύχασα/*silerem*), and in sleep would have been at rest (ἀνεπαυσάμην/*requiescerem*).” Job 3:17b (repeating the same theme): “there the very weary have found rest (ἀνεπαύσαντο/*requieverunt*) for the body.” Job 3:26: “I was neither at peace (εἰρήνευσα/*dissimulaui*), nor did I have quiet (ἡσύχασα/*silui*), nor was I at rest (ἀνεπαυσάμην/*quieui*), but anger came to me.” NETS: 672.

³³ Job 9:28a: “I quiver in all my limbs” (σεῖομαι πᾶσιν τοῖς μέλεσιν); 9:29: “But since I am impious, why have I not died?” (ἐπειδὴ δέ εἰμι ἀσεβής, διὰ τί οὐκ ἀπέθανον?); 10:19b: “For why was I not carried from the womb to the grave?” (διὰ τί γὰρ ἐκ γαστρὸς εἰς μνήμα οὐκ ἀπηλλάγην?); 10:20: “Is not the length of my life short? Let me rest a little” (ἢ οὐκ ὀλίγος ἐστὶν ὁ χρόνος τοῦ βίου μου ἕασόν με ἀναπαύσασθαι μικρὸν). NETS: 676.

³⁴ Ps 141:8a (NETS: 616): “Bring my soul out of prison so that I may acknowledge your name” (ἐξάγαγε ἐκ φυλακῆς τὴν ψυχὴν μου τοῦ ἐξομολογήσασθαι τῷ ὀνόματί σου). N.B.: in the Psalm, David is *not* asking to die.

³⁵ At *War* 3.362–82 and elsewhere; [Mason 1991](#), 161ff.

of long lives and God-appointed deaths, Job and David proffer the more gripping example of the right way *to seek death out* if one truly wants to die: Ask God “to give you rest,” “to free your soul from prison.” Unlike with Abraham and Moses, the deaths of Job and David remain unmentioned.

Josephus’ argumentation continues apace: “none of the saints takes his life from himself, none seizes it.”³⁶ For suicide is robbery (*lucrum*) if death is gain, *sacrilegium* if life is a good thing. He proceeds into the merits of death in battle, which is indeed noble *if* one dies there “according to the law of battle” (*belli lege*) – a Ciceronian turn of phrase, by the way³⁷ – that is, is killed by an attacking enemy. Suicide, on the other hand, he considers criminal (i.e., a *latrocinium* and a *scelus*), whether individually wrought or sought by the hand of another. In service of this argument, Josephus introduces Saul, whom he identifies explicitly as an *exemplum*, along with his son Jonathan. Here Josephus makes a direct link between the actions of a (negative) *exemplum*, Saul, and his own chosen course of action. Saul comes off looking not unlike the cowardly Nero described in Suetonius’ *Lives of the Caesars*.³⁸ “But I,” Josephus insists, “am no coward.”

Jane Chaplin has demonstrated how Livy’s history goes beyond the simple ethical-historical assumptions of exemplarity and actually shows how *exempla* are received, understood, and acted upon by characters within his historical narrative.³⁹ At *De Excidio* 3.17.1 we find the exact same thing. Ps-Hegesippus has his narrative characters cite and apply specific *exempla* in a kind of extroverted, practical ethics in action. This exposes the realism of Ps-Hegesippus’ character speeches: Here he imagines a feasible way by which Josephus might have cited realistic examples in his own defense. Saul provides a good example of this discursive phenomenon. Josephus disagrees with his comrades about the moral to be drawn from Saul’s example. He contends with them over the form of action that Saul’s precedent should prompt, thereby exploiting a kind of

³⁶ Cf. Jon 4:3, 8 where, somewhat humorously, the prophet Jonah asks to die; also Elijah at 1 Kgs 19:4.

³⁷ Cicero *De lege agraria* 2.16.40 (*belli lege*), and especially *Pro rege Deiotaro* 9.25 (*a quo cum uel interfici belli lege potuisset*); cf. *De Legibus* 2.14.34 (*de iure belli*) as also in *Orationes philippicae* 5.9.25; 13.15.32. Thanks to Rebecca Langlands for encouraging me to pursue this Ciceronian connection more fully.

³⁸ See Suetonius *Nero* 47.2 and especially 49.3–4. Thanks to Rebecca Langlands for pointing out this parallel to me.

³⁹ Chaplin 2000.

historical version of the “is/ought problem.”⁴⁰ Josephus’ interlocutors had put Saul forward as a paragon of patriotism and self-abnegation in 3.16.1. Not so, objects Josephus. But Josephus not only objects to his comrades’ interpretation: He problematizes Saul’s character as one whose crime appears incidental, but is in fact predestined. Before even broaching the subject of Saul’s exemplary action, Josephus states that Saul was installed as *rex* against the divine will (*aduersus uoluntatem diuinam*). Furthermore, he had already earned himself the *offensa dei*, for which reason his *successor* emerged before his death (another indirect reference to King David; cf. 1 Sam 16). Before introducing anything that Saul did, Josephus states that he constitutes an *egregium exemplum* (“a perfect example”) of a man from whom the *gratia dei*, the “grace of God,” was absent. It was for this reason, Josephus implies, that Saul had never really been able to live (*iam non poterat uiuere*) and thus desired to die (*uoluit mori*).

From the outset, therefore, Saul presents a contextually appropriate *exemplum* for Josephus, for he had a reason to desire death; but Josephus goes on to suggest that, even so, self-killing is wrong. He suggests this first by stating that “even he himself” (*tamen et ipse*) – that is, Saul, who had not been able to live well for lack of divine favor – asked someone else (his *socius*) to kill him. Even Saul did not move straight to suicide. But the comrade Saul asked to perform this service (*ministerium*) recused himself because he considered it criminal (*scelus putauit*). Again, Josephus’ point is clear, lurking barely beneath the surface of his rhetoric: Killing oneself by means of a comrade is as reprehensible as autothanasia (and, one may infer, a good comrade will recognize this), and futile life prospects are no excuse for suicide.

The Saul *exemplum* as employed by Josephus at *De Excidio* 3.17.1 illustrates beautifully the propensity for *exempla* to function as unstable, contestable “sites” that can be plied in various directions.⁴¹ Saul is made to represent one position by Josephus’ comrades, whereupon

⁴⁰ Just as the so-called is/ought problem, often credited to David Hume, posits that indicative or positive statements cannot provide the basis for normative or prescriptive ones, so also one could argue that just because something happened historically, or some person did some thing in the past, this does not in itself suggest the proper action to be taken here and now. In other words, the meaning of *exempla* is debatable and history does not and cannot teach us what to do per se. Perhaps we could call this the “was/should problem.”

⁴¹ Langlands 2018, 206, defines “sites of exemplarity” as points of discourse that “are not fixed reference points for literary allusions, but are shifting fields of reference.”

Josephus turns around and uses the exact same character to contradict their claims. And note that Josephus uses “external” aspects of the tradition in his argument: He is not working only with the material presented by his interlocutors, but takes the whole biblical episode into account to argue that, no, Saul is in fact *not* a good example of noble death for country. In portraying Saul’s legacy being used in this way, Ps-Hegesippus resembles very much the exemplarity at work in Livy as described by Chaplin: Historiographical characters recall and apply actionable ethics within particular narrative contexts, often those involving oratory.

Thus does Josephus frame the highly qualified *exemplum* of Saul. Abandoned by God and bereft of support, only then did Saul turn his sword against himself (*ipse gladium in se conuerteret*). This was not the result of right reasoning (*non usus consilio*) but rather of having no one to do him the favor (*destitutus ministerio*). At this point Josephus changes tack, turning to question his accusers about the *exemplum* of Saul whom they themselves, after all, had chosen when they brought him up in *De Excidio* 3.16. He proffers a two-part question, a rhetorical trap. First he asks, if Saul killed himself fearing (*timens*) that his enemies would make sport of him, why praise what is done out of fear? On the flip side, Josephus queries, if he was not afraid (*si non timuit*), then why did he ask someone else to kill him to begin with? The energy of this argument stems from the rhetorical trope of *timor* – an extremely powerful subject within ancient military discourse.⁴² Josephus plays upon accusations and implications of fear to critique, challenge, and preclude the arguments of his accusers.⁴³ They could not possibly emulate Saul’s “patriotic” suicide if this was in fact an act of cowardice. Yet Saul would never have enlisted back-up had he not been afraid. Josephus lets his question speak for itself, turning next to his own predicament and its parallels to Saul’s ancient plight.

⁴² See Livy 10.2.3; 10.11.5 with Bittarello 2009, 217–19 (also discussing Vergil’s *Aeneid*). Earlier, Xenophon established a dichotomy between θάρρος (boldness, confidence) and φόβος (fear, panic, dread): *Anabasis* 3.2.16; *Cyropaideia* 3.3.19, 5.2.33, 5.3.47; *De equitum magistro* 5.3, discussed in Lendon 1999. For a lexical, psychological, historical study of fear, including *timor*, in the ancient Roman world, see Fields 2012, esp. 27–40, 166.

⁴³ The popular nature of discourse on *timor* may be demonstrated by the term’s frequent appearance in the *Sententiae* of Publilius Syrus, who says, among other things, that “Fear is an impediment to every virtue” (*uirtutis omnis impedimentum est timor*). See further Fields 2012, 39–40. Of course, a negative valuation of fear seems an almost universal feature of culture; it was certainly espoused by ancient Jews and Christians (see, e.g., Ps 23:4; 1 John 4:18).

Moving to the first person – “*ego*” – Josephus next maps the terms and ideas raised in his discussion of Saul directly onto his own anticipated action. He states that he fears neither being made sport of nor being betrayed by the Romans. For Josephus, the applicability of the Saul *exemplum* revolves around the notion of fear. Saul acted out of fear (and thus, it follows, *not* out of patriotism) in his pursuit of death; thus he cannot be enlisted as an appropriate model for present action. Josephus hereby turns the *exemplum* of Saul around, wresting it from his comrades’ argument and re-weaponizing it as a defeater for any argument *for* suicide that his countrymen might present. Yet, in doing so, Josephus’ presentation of Saul could itself be open to critique: At first he seems to suggest that, of all people, Saul might understandably seek after death; he was, after all, abandoned by God and unable to live (rightly). Then he submits that even Saul did not move straight to self-killing, but asked another’s help. Thus far, Saul is an ambivalent *exemplum*, a figure who has a reason to pursue death but does not want to do it himself. His recourse to suicide is done not via *consilium* but due to lack of *ministerium*. Thus, in one sense, Saul is not a model of what not to do, but a figure whom fate and circumstances had condemned, and who even then only killed himself because none of his allies would. But Josephus turns Saul into a symbol of fear, an apophatic lesson about the wrong reason to do things. Is Saul a responsible actor or a passive victim? Is the moral of this story his motivations or his actions? Was his asking another to kill him a lesson in the avoidance of self-killing, or a demonstration of his *timor*? To all such questions, Josephus’ answer would seem to be “both.” Here Saul reveals another feature of exemplarity pointed out by Langlands: *Exempla* tend to defy being pigeon-holed – plying them into communicating one single thing takes work, and may backfire.⁴⁴

For Josephus in the speech at *De Excidio* 3.17.1, Saul is a complicated figure, a multivalent *exemplum*. But at least one thing is clear: His example does *not* render licit the option of suicide. This Josephus makes unmistakably clear by eventually stating that Saul alone (*solus*) opted for suicide, “not Jonathan, nor anyone else in our scriptures” (*non Ionatha, non quisquam alius in nostris scripturis*). The enlistment of Jonathan here is a powerful comparandum. The young prince appears routinely better than his sulking father within the biblical narrative and here he adds substance to Josephus’ argument: Others who were fighting alongside Saul at the time of his death, like Jonathan, could have opted for suicide, but did not. Even

⁴⁴ Langlands 2018, 61–64.

more powerful is Josephus' sweeping gesture to the entirety of the Jewish scriptural tradition, where no one else ever chooses suicide. Against such a tradition, apparently following an impulse to explain further Saul's singularity in this regard, Josephus adds a final comment about the failed king: Is it surprising (*quid mirum*) that Saul of all people committed suicide, given that he proved himself able even to kill his own son (*potuit etiam filium occidere*)? Here Josephus alludes to one of several episodes where Saul tried to kill Jonathan, perhaps to 1 Sam 14:39–44, where Saul intended to kill Jonathan on the basis of a rash vow that he (Saul) had made, or to 1 Sam 20:33, where Saul hurled a spear at Jonathan as he previously had at David. Whatever the intended intertext, the point is clear, and adds one more layer of complexity to Saul's exemplary status in *De Excidio* 3.17.1. Saul tried to kill his own son, so we should not be surprised that such a man eventually killed himself. By undermining Saul's integrity, Josephus sweeps the feet out from under the argument of his compatriots.

After disarming the Saul (and Jonathan) *exemplum*, Josephus immediately moves on to neutralize his comrades' use of Aaron. Citing the episode from Num 16:48, Josephus repeats the first part of his interlocutors' statement about Aaron – that he stood between the living and the dead to stave off plague – only to correct their interpretation of it.⁴⁵ Josephus' retooling of Aaron is more straightforward than the case of Saul. Here he simply posits a distinction between *uirtus* and *temeritas*, arguing that Aaron's self-endangering act on behalf of the people was done out of bravery, not a desire for death. To act without fear of death is not the same as inviting death upon oneself. Josephus plays on the fine line between a virtue and a vice, another typical dynamic of exemplarity,⁴⁶ and on the ultimately unknowable motivations of historical figures. And Josephus' statement that Aaron did not fear death (*mortem non timuit*) returns the conversation again to the subject of fear. While fear could be seen as useful among ancient writers and thinkers, in the context of a conversation between military combatants (i.e., Josephus and his comrades), and most usually in Roman discourse, fear was seen as a crutch, a vice, a danger. As

⁴⁵ The reference to a serpent in Josephus' remembrance is either a Christian correlation between the figure of the serpent and the Devil, denoting that Aaron foiled the Devil's plans for God's people, or, just as likely, a conflation between the story of Num 16:48, where the Lord sent a plague (ἡ θραῦσις/*plaga*) among the people, and Num 21:4–9, where he sent snakes (ὄφεις/*serpentes*). In both stories, the Lord lethally chastises his people until the Lord's ambassadors (Moses and Aaron) intercede by prayer and then bodily.

⁴⁶ Langlands 2018, 109–10.

conventionally in the Western film genre, so in ancient Roman discourse fear was a dangerous and potentially explosive topic. For, within any culture of honor, to call someone a coward “is fightin’ words.”

Fear of death was often a weakness targeted by the Romans, whose culture was so influenced by Stoic ethics.⁴⁷ It was also a Jewish trope (cf. *De Excidio* 5.53.1). By making the conversation about fear, Josephus forestalls any objections to his argument that do *not* first absolve themselves of being grounded in fear.⁴⁸ His argument against suicide has become an argument *contra timorem*. Moving from *exempla* that demonstrate that righteous people do not choose suicide, *De Excidio* 3.17.1 introduces *exempla* that show that suicide is an action that comes from *timor*, as in the case of Saul. And *timor* is, like *temeritas*, opposed to *uirtus*. Aaron’s apparent willingness to risk death was an act of *uirtus* and evinced no *temeritas* or *timor*. Aaron, standing in for every other person within “*nostra scriptura*” except for Saul, was untinged by association with suicide. Aaron, Josephus maintains, acted from bravery, not fear.

Aaron, like Saul, shows how malleable *exempla* could be, especially in the context of argument. This resonates again with Langlands’ discussion of the Roman *exemplum*, which allows “space for ‘heterogeneity of judgment’ even when” a person is “strongly advocating a particular moral position as the best one.”⁴⁹ Another way to put this is that bringing up *exempla* amid debate is risky: Josephus’ comrades use Aaron to argue in favor of readiness to die (i.e., a willingness to commit suicide), but Josephus turns Aaron around to show that his example differentiates between willingness to die and self-killing. In fact, Aaron’s example ends up condemning suicide as ignoble, an action driven by fear (*timor*).

Eventually, Josephus situates himself in this same Aaronic line, as it were, claiming that he is acting in a similar manner (Josephus was a priest, after all). He puts his “hands” up to stand between life and death – perhaps between the suicide or murder threatened by his fellows and life – come what may. The implication is that Josephus, as he “stands in the gap,” opens himself up to attack but nevertheless stands for what is right, consequences be damned. Josephus frames his own decisions and actions in terms of the ancient virtues of the *exempla* he has utilized: His

⁴⁷ Epicureans, Stoics, and Sceptics all castigated the fear of death.

⁴⁸ On fear as a *causa* that “could trigger or motivate actions” or a *finis*, “the result or outcome of some actions, decisions, or behaviors,” in the context of the Roman virtue discourse, see Balmaceda 2017, 182–83.

⁴⁹ Langlands 2018, 52.

virtuous comportment is justified by model figures. He is not inferior to (*non degener ab*) Aaron.

Josephus' use of *exempla* at *De Excidio* 3.17.1, like his comrades' use of them at 3.16.1, carries the tacit assumption that both parties will recognize the validity of these *exempla*. Even if Josephus' interlocutors will not cede his interpretation of certain *exempla*, we have already seen that they recognize their authority. It is no accident that most of the *exempla* Josephus brings up are those his comrades had already mentioned. Exemplary discourse is a contact sport. Common knowledge of and respect for *exempla* are what render them effective, and reversible.⁵⁰ The reason Josephus and his interlocutors could bandy biblical *exempla* about is that they all already assumed their validity and importance, even if their meanings and messages were up for debate.

Following the Aaron *exemplum*, Josephus' speech departs momentarily from its exemplary focus and runs through a more straightforward version of Josephus' arguments contra suicide. He deals with the by now stock subjects of death, fear, and liberty, invoking the *lex naturae* and *scriptura* as sources of authority. Eventually, Josephus' speech turns to the soul-body dichotomy – employing the metaphors of a ship and steersman⁵¹ and of vessels of clay (a mixture of classical and Christian metaphors) – and his argument waxes philosophical. Josephus posits that, like soldiers, people ought to await God's orders to depart from this life; as slaves to God, humans ought to await God's command. The soldier/superior-slave/master metaphors quickly evolve into an introduction of a negative *exemplum* illustrating the price of action undertaken without divine sanction. Here Josephus' exemplary argument, taking a decided turn toward the macabre, enlists the "original" *exemplum*: Adam. The argument itself is straightforward: Like soldiers or slaves, humans owe it to their de facto master-general to await permission to die. To ignore such a necessity will result in a suboptimal afterlife. Adam fits into this framework in two ways. First, he illustrates what happens when one disobeys God: exclusion from Paradise. Though Adam's disobedience is not coterminous with suicide, his punishment for departing from the *praeceptum dei* (also called a *mandatum*) is made to mirror in nature and severity what the eternal result of suicide would be: expulsion *in tenebras exteriores*; that is, the state of being *exclusus de paradiso*. Second, God's

⁵⁰ Langlands 2018, 129–32 *et alibi*.

⁵¹ Cf. Aristotle *De Anima* 2.1.

seeking after Adam in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:8–9) situates Adam as someone who had fled from and thus was standing outside of divine presence (and, presumably, protection and blessing).

On the one hand, Adam comes to stand for Godward disobedience *tout court*. He is the paradigm of what happens when one disobeys God: exclusion. On the other, Adam becomes the model for what flight from God looks like; his post-disobedience status of *having fled* (*fugerit*) and of *being absent* from God (*apud deum non sit praesentia*) place him in a very real way outside the margins of divine blessing. These interrelated aspects of Adam type-cast him as a negative model. While the biblical Adam was not always a negative example, the shoe fits: Adam was always the original sinner. And Christian historians of late antiquity remembered him as such: In addition to Ps-Hegesippus, Philip of Side (c. 380–431+ CE) recalls how Adam was “cast out” (ἐξεβλήθη/ἐκβλήθεις) of paradise in his *Christian History* (frag 1).⁵² Ps-Hegesippus, likewise drawing upon the result of Adam’s action rather than its essence, imagines Josephus using Adam to make the inverted pronouncement, not that suicide is sin but that *sin is suicide*.

The Adam *exemplum* leads Josephus into what is arguably his most powerful objection to suicide: the serious ramifications of such a course in the afterlife. This issues into an amalgamated finale that Ps-Hegesippus adapts from Josephus’ *Jewish War*. It encompasses burial practices in view of suicide (suicides ought not be buried; some people even cut off their limbs); the correlations between suicide, parricide, treason, and murder; and further discussion of the rhetorically poignant argument of afterlife: Paradise does not receive (*non paradisus recepit*) suicides any more than it does *proditores* (traitors) or *percussores parentum* (murderers of parents). Eventually, Josephus works up to a final exasperated question: Amid so many evils, what pleasantness (*suauietas*) could the present life possibly hold? This brings Josephus to the end of his speech, which he makes in prayer and, citing one final *exemplum*, collocates Hebrewness and nobility in the person of Abraham.⁵³ Thus ends Josephus’ speech in *De Excidio* 3.17.1, a speech “by which he emptied of legitimacy the idea of a voluntary death” (3.18.1).⁵⁴

⁵² The verbiage differs between the manuscripts, but all three witnesses – Paris gr 1712, Bodleian gr 120, and Paris Suppl gr 685 – mention Adam’s being cast out of παραδείσος. See Heyden 2006, 213.

⁵³ Cf. 4 Macc 6:17–22, where Eleazar addresses the young people of Israel as “children of Abraham” in exactly the same context: that of the necessity and nobility of dying for the Jewish religion. See van Henten (forthcoming).

⁵⁴ CSEL 66.1: 220: *Haec Iosephus allegabat, quo euacuaret uoluntariae mortis adsertionem*.

Ps-Hegesippus takes some literary license with Josephus' ending prayer, probably picking up on the last sentence of Josephus' speech in his own *Jewish War* (3.382). There Josephus records himself as saying "I pray (εὐχομαι) for the faithlessness of the Romans" (i.e., that they would kill him rather than spare him), though no actual prayer is recorded.⁵⁵ The prayer Ps-Hegesippus scripts is apt, enveloping the central tenets of the address. Josephus invokes *natura*, *libertas*, and *pietas* and speaks in terms of "release" from the body-as-prison. Abraham, his final *exemplum*, represents Josephus' arguments beautifully. Josephus already called upon Abraham at his speech's beginning, and in his final prayer he returns to the theme of awaiting God's leave to die, something that, he avers, Abraham modeled well. Josephus' invocation of the *hereditas Abrahæ patris*, which he equates with being a *Hebraeus* (see [Chapter 2](#)), creates a link between Josephus the actor of the Jewish present and Abraham the national *exemplum* of the Hebrew past. Because of this link, Josephus casts Abraham's "waiting to die" "as normative, i.e. as having a morally prescriptive or obligatory character."⁵⁶ Biblical and Roman in different ways, Abraham is the typical *exemplum*.

BIBLICAL EXEMPLA AND ROMAN EXEMPLARITY IN *DE EXCIDIO* 3.16–17

The content of the exemplary discourse in *De Excidio* 3.16–17 must be understood in light of classical, or Roman, virtues, values, and exemplarity. The discourse of freedom, slavery, and servitude; debate over the legitimacy of suicide; the assumption of the importance of patriotism; the Platonic idea of the body as a prison; reference to *natura* and *pietas* as argumentative *topoi* – all of these were stock subjects of the Roman world. Deploying these themes within *exemplum*-filled speeches attributed to actors within historiography also bespeaks classical literary norms.

Not just the content, but also the style of these speeches' exemplarity resonates with Roman precedents. One of the key takeaways of Rebecca Langlands' *Exemplary Ethics in Ancient Rome* is that Roman *exempla* were malleable and unstable in practice. Far from models inviting blind, rote imitation, figures of the past and the stories by which they were

⁵⁵ Josephus invites creative expansion by following Josephus' speech immediately with: "By these *and many similar arguments* Josephus sought to deter his companions from suicide" (LCL 487: 110–13, emphasis mine).

⁵⁶ [Roller 2018](#), 8.

remembered operated as “sites of exemplarity” upon which could be founded multiperspectival discussions exposing and leveraging inherent ambiguity and multivalence.⁵⁷ Langlands shows through Cicero’s treatment of Manlius Torquatus in his *De finibus* the utility of *exempla* to “think around” issues: An *exemplum* could “form a kind of pivot between two opposing arguments.” The ability of *exempla* to facilitate such “controversial thinking” is, according to Langlands, one of their “key roles” within Roman ethics. This framework seems custom fit for *De Excidio* 3.16–17. At 3.16, Josephus’ Jewish comrades in arms cast Moses, Aaron, Saul, Jonathan, and David as those who were ready to embrace death gladly on behalf of God’s people. In 3.17, Josephus uses these exact same examples, adding in a handful of others for good measure, to undergird his counterargument, which treats the exact same topics but cuts in precisely the opposite direction. Langlands could have been describing this passage when she wrote that the “very co-existence of pointedness and flexibility (consensus and indeterminacy) ... creates the productive tension that powers exemplarity.”⁵⁸

Focalizing a story through different characters, drawing out variant aspects of a story, considering the impact and consequences of a deed – all of these strategies that emerge from *De Excidio* 3.16–17 fall right in line with the norms of Roman exemplarity. At the same time, however, the exemplarity at work in this debate is fundamentally Judeo-Christian. The *exempla* put forth are biblical, not classical. These passages not only help illustrate the partially classical nature of Ps-Hegesippus as author and *De Excidio* as work – they also expose the fundamental malleability of biblical role models in late antique thought. I would say that it is not usual practice for Christian authors to admit, much less to illustrate, that the biblical figures they idealize can be readily interpreted in different ways. But *De Excidio* 3.16–17 shows that this was the case, indeed is always the case when dealing with *exempla*.

THE CLASSICAL WORLD OF BIBLICAL EXEMPLA IN *DE EXCIDIO*

The arguments for and against suicide in *De Excidio* 3.16–17, which Ps-Hegesippus adopts from Josephus’ *Jewish War* and injects with a series of *exempla*, play upon themes common to the (Greco-)Roman world. Yet the

⁵⁷ See here Langlands 2018, 166–86, 258, 266.

⁵⁸ Langlands 2018, 142–43, also 150.

exempla used to fuel this discussion are biblical. This is not to say that the themes of suicide and military virtue were unknown to the Judeo-Christian tradition (though they were rare), nor is it to say that the *exempla* deployed here were not known more broadly within Greco-Roman literature (though they were equally rare). Rather, this combination illustrates the cultural marriage epitomized in Ps-Hegesippus' use of Hebrew heroes and representative of *De Excidio* overall. The Roman-Christian author Ps-Hegesippus uses the vernacular of classical Roman military discourse to imagine how the Jewish characters of his narrative would have debated suicide by means of ancestral *exempla*.

On a broader spectrum, Ps-Hegesippus' use of biblical *exempla* complicates the drawing of firm lines between Greek and/or Roman on one side and Jewish and/or Christian on the other.⁵⁹ These conventional dichotomies have been challenged in scholarship, but they often still constitute core assumptions in our language, if not in our thinking. The very tenacity of these ideas belies the oversimplification that they are merely conceptual relics to be overcome. One thing that this chapter and this book show is that such categories are simultaneously useful, perhaps even necessary, and problematic. Earlier I talked about the themes of *libertas* and *seruitus* and *timor/metus* being Roman commonplaces, because the ancient culture that made these subjects *topoi* was the culture created and fostered by the Roman Empire. I also talked about figures like Abraham and Moses and Aaron and Saul and Jonathan as being distinctively Jewish and/or Christian. And they are. But these categories, inasmuch as they do the work of categories – marking descriptive boundaries between included and excluded content – fail to signal the vast diversity that existed within the Roman and the Jewish and the Christian. They also fail to signal the interpenetration and transgression that could occur in the borderlands between. For, while Latin notions such as *libertas* and *seruitus* and *uirtus* are undeniably Roman in some way, they clearly belonged to Latin-writing Christians as well.⁶⁰ Were such authors Roman Christians, or Christian Romans? Conversely, while biblical personalities were always understood to be the purview of Jews and Christians, Roman authors knew and wrote

⁵⁹ See Dohrmann and Reed 2013 (esp. 1–22), who eschew “traditional modes and models of comparison, as predicated on the parallel analysis of ‘religions,’ ‘identities,’ or ‘cultures,’ projected as discrete yet commensurable entities” (3–4).

⁶⁰ Scanlan 1972: “the thought-processes, the character, and the culture of a people are best and most quickly and economically understood through a study of their language” (240).

about them to an extent. Adjectives like “Christian” and “Roman,” like the concepts they signal, only work so far.

Our analysis of *De Excidio* 3.16–17 suggests a conceptual universe inclusive of *Romanitas* and *Christianitas*. Ps-Hegesippus had a foot in both (imaginary) camps. But *exempla* have a particular capacity to drive this point home. Nor is it only *biblical exempla* that do this. While not the subject of this book, it should be noted that Ps-Hegesippus mentions a host of decidedly Roman *exempla* as well: for instance, Cornelius Scipio (2.9.1, 4.11), Cato (5.27), Hannibal (2.9.1, 4.11, 5.31.2, 5.46.1), Manlius Torquatus (3.24.1), and Fabius Maximus *Cunctator* (4.11).⁶¹ He puts the famous *exempla* Cloelia and Mucius Scaevola in conversation with biblical *exempla* in Titus’ speech at *De Excidio* 5.46.1. While Ps-Hegesippus’ treatment of these figures is a story for another time, the sheer fact of their appearance in *De Excidio* is significant. They hint at a larger truth: While it is biblical *exempla* that loom so large in *De Excidio*, that constitute such interesting and important parts of Ps-Hegesippus’ articulation of Jewish history, the world that these figures inhabit is interwoven with the cultural fabric of Rome. The conceptual world of Ps-Hegesippus, the Latinate world of his linguistic expression, even the narrative world of his first-century storyline are imbued with shades of Romanness. The world of biblical *exempla* that emerges in chapters like *De Excidio* 3.16 and 3.17, and spans across *De Excidio*, is in part a classical world, forged in conversation with Greco-Roman culture and to some extent illegible to the person illiterate of that past, most particularly its habits of historiography and exemplarity.

* * *

When Ps-Hegesippus imagines a group of first-century Judean soldiers arguing the relative virtues of surrendering to an ostensibly lenient Roman enemy, he envisions them doing so against an ancestral backdrop of biblical-historical *exempla*. In putting this imagined argument down on vellum, Ps-Hegesippus reveals himself to be a classical author: By inserting *exempla* into contradictory historiographical speeches, and by imagining such speeches into the mouths of “others” (members of a group to which the author does not belong, in this case Jews),⁶² Ps-Hegesippus dons the garb of a Greek or Roman historian. This chapter shows the

⁶¹ See [Sehlmeyer 2009](#), 196n406–n407, 222, 293n64 *et alibi*.

⁶² For this particular form of Roman historiographical speech-writing, see [Adler 2011](#).

classicizing nature of Ps-Hegesippus' historiography, and the Romanness of his exemplarity, more starkly than any chapter yet. In this way it illustrates the unique character of biblical interpretation and reception in *De Excidio*: As a Christian author, Ps-Hegesippus is a rarity inasmuch as his treatment of Old Testament figures and stories comes in the form of imagined conversations between historical actors who looked to such *exempla* to gauge and to guide their own behavior.

While this chapter has concentrated upon the classical character of some of Ps-Hegesippus' biblical exemplarity, the astute reader may have noted another curiosity that crops up intermittently in *De Excidio* 3.17. In Josephus' speech, quotations or paraphrases of a handful of New Testament passages emerge. Into Josephus' open mouth is stuffed the language of Rom 7:24, Matt 16:19 and 22:13, 2 Tim 1:14, Phil 1:21, 1 Cor 10:3, 2 Cor 4:7 and 7:10, and John 10:15, in that order. Flavius Josephus speaks Christian Scripture! But what are we to make of this? As it turns out, the world of biblical *exempla* within Ps-Hegesippus' history of the Jews is not just classical – it is also Christian. This brings us to [Chapter 9](#) and a fitting climax for our study: an examination of the two chapters that mark the apogee of Ps-Hegesippus' exemplarity, infusing Jewish history with Hebrew heroes in a classical style full of Christian undertones.

A Christian World of Hebrew *Exempla*

War and Faith in De Excidio 5.15–16

By a wide margin, the greatest density of *exempla* in *De Excidio* accrues in two speeches made in sequence by Josephus in 5.15–16.¹ As in 3.16–17, so also in these twin addresses Ps-Hegesippus rescripts speeches found in Josephus' *Jewish War* (at 5.363–419). As before, while Ps-Hegesippus adopts the rhetorical content of the speeches found in his Greek source, he also, in extending them to twice their original length, fits them to his own rhetorical interests and style by the insertion of a plethora of heroes of Hebrew antiquity.

In *De Excidio* 5.15–16, these biblical *exempla* are corralled by Josephus as he addresses, at Titus' behest, his Jewish countrymen holed up behind the walls of Jerusalem. From beyond the walls, Josephus attempts to dissuade the Jews from continued resistance to Rome, which can only breed destruction. Josephus' argument is a tour de force of exemplarity. He conjures a torrent of biblical figures, first to show that the Jews belong to a tradition that has preferred slavery (*seruitus*) to freedom (*libertas*) when expedient. He demonstrates that conventional warfare has never profited the Jews or their ancestors: Any success among the Jews or Hebrews of old resulted from faith, prayer, and piety, not from weapons, bravery, and force (cf. Josephus *Antiquities* 1.14–15). If the Jews want success they need prayer (*oratio*) and faith (*fides*). They should look to their ancestors as examples. Yet, as we shall see, while these Hebrew *exempla* are meant to inform Jewish action,

¹ Bell 1977, 201–3, noting how Ps-Hegesippus “embroiders with Biblical *exempla*” this section (202). This “longest deliberative speech” of Book 5 (201) plays a “pivotal structural role” through its central theme of the Romans’ invincibility and the futility of resisting them (77).

they are conceived and conveyed in conspicuously Christian terms. In this chapter, we see how the Jewishness and Romanness of Ps-Hegesippus' biblical *exempla* are complemented, even controlled, by a subtle Christianness infused in their presentation. To get to this argument, I have here preferred to discuss all of the biblical *exempla* that appear in *De Excidio* 5.15–16 in sequence, rather than selecting a few exemplary passages. This approach has the advantage of showing the extent of biblical exemplarity at work within *De Excidio*'s most *exempla*-filled passages. As a consequence, this chapter falls a bit on the longer side, but this is balanced out by the payoff we get by gaining a full view of the textual evidence before apprehending the details of the chapter's central thesis.

JOSEPHUS BEFORE THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM: THE NARRATIVE CONTEXT OF THE SPEECHES

By the time the reader reaches *De Excidio* 5.15, the narrative is at a fever pitch. For a work about Jerusalem's destruction, this point of the narrative marks a critical moment: Titus and the Romans face Jerusalem's three walls, two of which have been destroyed (cf. Josephus *War* 5.364), and stand on the precipice of overthrowing the great Judean city. Or so it would seem. The Jews have proven hardier defenders than the Romans would have liked. Faced with Roman siege engines (*machinae obsidionis*), they have even captured several war machines for themselves, which they have used to combat the Roman ramparts (5.14.4). In such straits, Titus (whom Ps-Hegesippus calls *Caesar*) attempts to dissuade the holdouts behind the walls from involving themselves in the destruction of the already captured city (5.14.5). By making promises, Titus hoped to persuade the Jews to hand the city (*urbs*) over into his power (*potes-tas*), since it was being pushed toward ultimate destruction (*premeretur ad excidium supremum*) and was already under siege. Titus appeals to both country (*patria*) and city (*ciuitas*) in his bid to come to a peaceful resolution.

In his efforts at persuasion, Titus' appeals take on a different character when he enlists the help of a prized prisoner: Josephus himself. At the end of 5.14 we read:

And so he commanded Josephus himself to address the citizens in their native language, so that he might even perhaps turn his fellow kinsmen to renounce their perpetual madness. He, who certainly knew the hatred of the Jews which was poured out against him and who had nevertheless been able to stand further than an arrow-shot away from the walls, yet so that he could still be heard, laid

out what would be in the best interest of the citizens [of Jerusalem] in this his well-known exhortation.

De Excidio 5.14.5²

As a whole, *De Excidio* 5.14 sets the stage narratively for Josephus to deliver in his “well-known speech” (*noto sibi alloquio*), a tour de force regarding the futility and foolishness of continued resistance to Rome. This speech, or rather speeches, already significant in Josephus’ *War*, take on an oversized importance within *De Excidio* as Ps-Hegesippus balloons them to twice their original length.³ Within them, as we will see, Ps-Hegesippus’ insertion of myriad *exempla* from the Jewish Scriptures concocts a distinctively Christian articulation of Hebrew antiquity.

AN EXEMPLARY WORLD OF VICTORS AND VANQUISHED: THE SPEECH OF *DE EXCIDIO* 5.15

In his Greek version of the speeches parallel to *De Excidio* 5.15–16, Josephus does not list all of the *exempla* that appear in *De Excidio*. But he does list a few, which will have given Ps-Hegesippus the idea for including more. Moreover, in the earlier part of his speech (in *oratio obliqua*), Josephus describes his own arguments for yielding to the Romans, within which we find the statement:

There was, in fact, an established law, as supreme among brutes as among men, “Yield to the stronger” and “The mastery is for those pre-eminent in arms.” That was why their forefathers, men who in soul and body, aye and in resources to boot, were by far their superiors, had yielded to the Romans—a thing intolerable to them, had they not known that God was on the Roman side.

Josephus *War* 5.367–69⁴

Thereafter, Josephus several more times mentions the pre-Jewish past as a gauge and model for the Jewish present, though he does not name names the way that Ps-Hegesippus does. Based on this firm Josephan foundation, Ps-Hegesippus proves himself as a rhetorician and speech-writer as he imagines all the biblical precedents that Josephus could, would, or should have included.

² CSEL 66.1: 318. The term *contribules* (sg. *contribulis*) – lit. “of the same *tribus*” – is “very rare” yet, as it happens, a term familiar to late fourth-century Christian Latinity: Jerome *Comm. Gal.* 2.10; Ambrose *Ep.* 6.14 (*L&S* ad loc.).

³ Bell 1977, 201, describes it as “more than twice as long as Josephus’, 395 lines (adj. 527) to 246.”

⁴ LCL 210: 116–17.

As mentioned in [Chapter 2](#), *De Excidio* 5.15 is addressed to its listeners as “Hebrews” (*Hebraei*), establishing the national character of the speech’s subsequent rhetoric and *exempla*:

“It was human nature, O Hebrews, to fight stubbornly before the matter had come to an end, while you still thought yourselves to be superior due to your location and the havens of your well-known region—given that the Romans, who are indomitable in war, were not to be provoked to arms (by whom those who had conquered you [in the past] have often been conquered)—but still, the improvident minds of men hold to this error in favorable circumstances, both because the fate of war is usually uncertain and [because], for that reason, a person commits himself to chance, even one of lesser courage; at the last you have placed your hope in walls, yet you have not thought of the overthrow drawing ever nearer to the Temple.

Spare the shrines, spare the altars, spare the one-time house of heaven! For now even God himself has deserted you, because you have deserted the cultivation of piety. We have carried war into the middle of the Temple. Fires flit all around the Temple, but not as they used to: now armed men stand around them. Nevertheless, even up to now those who maintain hands pure from sacrilege want to spare and not to contaminate the sacred doorposts nor abolish the ancient rites, if you would but permit it.

What else is to be expected? Two walls have been toppled, a third survives, and it is itself weaker than the two that have fallen. Or is divine protection and help expected from the inner places? But the one who was defending us has gone over to the enemy, because the one whom we used to worship the Romans have revered, but we have offended.

For who does not know that God is with them, who have subjected all places to themselves except for those that are untraversable due to excessive heat or cold and therefore lie outside of the Roman *imperium* because by the same token they lie outside of the customary boundaries of civilization. God had given power by turn to diverse peoples, at first the Egyptians, thereafter to the Jews, and no one denies that he had been a helper to the Assyrians and even to the Persians, and thereafter he switched over to the Romans to continue with them; at last, he yielded universal rule to them, with every land given into their possession.

What have you to do with the conquerors of the whole earth, to whom the secrets of the sea and the far reaches of India lie bear? And what if I should add to this Britain, which was cut off from the entire world by an interposing sea but returned again to the inhabited world by the Romans? At these Scotland trembles, which owes nothing to the nations; Saxony trembles, made inaccessible by marshes and hedged in by unpassable regions, which, granted, would appear to venture the strategies of war, but which itself was often added to Roman triumphs. It is called the mightiest race of men and surpasses others, yet it is supported by pirate ships and not by [real] strength, prepared better for flight than for war.

But you respond that you would rather die than give up your liberty. When, O Jews, has this way of thinking gone well for you, or when with the Hebrews was expedient servitude not preferred to useless liberty? The patriarch Jacob himself led the Hebrews into Egypt, lest they perish from starvation. At the same time his twelve sons the patriarchs went down, those famous beginnings of our race. There was

Judah, that noble stock of the Jews, who gave his name to the people; there Joseph, lofty with his chariot and horses, chose to submit himself to a master so that he might sustain them rather than to return them to the liberty of their peculiar origin; there Benjamin, detained by his true sibling through a pious fraud, agreed to this trickery, because there was no reproach in serving those who were more powerful; there their descendants, when summoned by Moses, nevertheless desired to remain.

Thus, even to your ancestors hard service was not so disagreeable that it was not preferred to dangers. Therefore you served the Egyptians—and I wish that it were only that one time! But not only then were you in servitude, when you preferred the nourishment of extreme servitude to the food which was rained from heaven, but also thereafter, conquered and captured you descended into Egypt when you fled from the Assyrians. You also served the Macedonians, and you furthermore served the Assyrians through many seasons over the years, and that servitude was agreeable to you. You have served the Persians, the Seleucids, the Palestinians [i.e., Canaanites], yet you find the Romans alone to be unendurable for you, those whom they themselves served to whom you have been servants.

Therefore is it hatred or gratitude that you owe to those who made you equals to your masters? I see this as your vindication, not your shame, because you have been vindicated by these [Romans] from those to whom you used to be subjected. Assyria, who held sway over all Asia, is pressed down into servitude. Egypt plows for the Romans, and he sows from his own resources what he then harvests for them. Macedonia, which when it had conquered Persia spread its imperium all the way to India, acknowledges as masters those whom they knew not, and they remember in vain that they have established the name of the Aeacidæ among their kings, they who assuredly allowed the triumph of no others except that of the Romans, by whom even Pyrrus himself, carrying on the stock and race of Achilles' line, was defeated in war and thus subjected himself with the goal of acquiring peace so that he might seek pardon.

And what shall I say of the Palestinians, whom the power of a single governor controls? Ingrates! Is it not your honor to serve with the Persians? For this is to serve alongside kings, and having the greatest king is the consolation of the one who is subject. But I ask you: when were you who now refuse servitude ever free? When then have you been free? Or at what time did you who were under a king hold power over others? You used to have God as your king, but you repudiated his kingship under whom alone you had [ever] been free. You preferred to serve men. Why have you dismissed the testimonies of your fathers, o stiff-necked people just like your fathers?

You elected a king whose name was Saul. When he was killed, the Palestinian people ruled over you. After a time David entered into kingship over the entire people, and he was certainly a milder master but a master nonetheless. And before David rested, even he himself imposed a king upon the [Hebrew] race. From Solomon it was rent back into two kingdoms and [his] inheritance was divided by a long succession of tyranny. So that I may pass over the captivities quickly: Cyrus returned most of the Jews to their lands and their sacred things. But your forefathers, when they were being worn down by onerous wars with the Persians—however renowned they were due to the triumphs of the Maccabees—they chose for themselves a Roman alliance.

Holy Scripture records the covenants of many embassies. You who were slaves of the Persians were made friends of the Romans. But again you preferred to have a tyrant than a high priest, to whom the people could submit; when the harshness of your tyrants had become intolerable, with Herod dead and Archelaus defeated, you asked to come under a Roman emperor. You handed yourselves over to the emperor, to whom all are subjects, so as to change to a more tolerable servitude. For to serve in common with everyone else is a kind of liberty, because the compliance of those serving is dignified by the greatness of those who rule. Even if the Romans do not do away with servitude, they are the authors of liberty, they who have not only killed a harsh king but, what's more, have not endured a hard one, and for that reason the name of the emperor among them is 'Augustus,' because it magnifies their greatness, not because it oppresses others.

But so be it: if it be not expedient to you to submit to the Roman Empire, we will see if this is [the choice] of free men, [we will see] if it is not a death sentence. The Roman battle lines are upon you, the ruins of your ancestral land are upon you, the destruction of the Temple is upon you. Consider then not what is expedient, but what is possible. What needs to be weighed in the balance now is not the pretence of your solemn vows but a reckoning of your capabilities.

Everyone knows that the same law of nature is built into everyone: into men, into birds, into wild animals, into beasts, so that each gives way to the one that is more powerful—the bull to the lion, the deer to the bear, the goat to the leopard, the hawk to the eagle, the pigeon to the hawk, weaker bulls to the bull itself, flocks of sheep to the ram, goats to the lynx—and, lest there seem to be some different reality of a different kind, you to those who are more powerful.

For the Romans drive no one out, but you drive them out; indeed they continue to spread, lest anyone conquered [by them] be expelled from their lands. They reserved part of the kingdom for Antiochus. And now for what else does Caesar labor but that your land not be deserted, your territory not be left vacant, your city not be overturned, your Temple not be burned up? Victory is not given to all. Nature has given it to a few to rule, to many to submit. Bulls are eminent among cattle, rams among flocks. Eminence is the innate disposition of some, tameness the innate disposition of many. But you, don tameness; accept the submission the wild animals assume.”

When Josephus had said these things, they reviled him from the wall, they cursed him who was urging what was expedient. Furthermore, many of them shot arrows in case they might be able to wound him mortally. But he, because he had not swayed such ungovernable people by reason, thought that they might be brought to an understanding through the testimonies of the Scriptures, especially because they kept saying that God was still not going to deprive his own Temple of protection.

De Excidio 5.15.⁵

Josephus begins by rationalizing Jewish resistance up to that point given the Jews' home-field advantage: Rome, though mighty, was not easily provoked, and the luck of the draw tended to embolden men at war. He

⁵ CSEL 66.1: 318–23.

calls for the Jews to think about the Temple and its desecration: God could not be expected to aid the Jews with the sacred precincts in such disrepair. This leads Josephus to a crux point.

Josephus frames his important postulate as a rhetorical question: “who does not know that God is with those who have subjected all places to themselves?” This leads Josephus into an overview of the “ages of empires”: God had given *potentia* to diverse peoples starting with the Egyptians, then the Jews, then the Assyrians, then the Persians, and eventually the Romans. These had uncovered the “secrets of the ocean” all the way to India, then to Britannia; even Scotland and Saxony “trembled” at Roman might. Josephus uses this impressive demonstration of all-encompassing Roman power to undergird his point: Resistance to Rome is futile. He is speaking to Jewish listeners who, he avers, claim “to prefer to die than to abandon liberty.” It is here that he brings forward *exempla* from Hebrew antiquity to help show the Jews how their ancestors fit into the global, historical vision he has cast, and to suggest how that should inform their behavior.

Josephus begins, appropriately, with “Israel” himself – that is, Jacob, here *Iacob patriarcha* – and his twelve sons, who came to embody ever after the tribal organization of Jewish self-identification. As he brings Jacob in, Josephus turns to addressing as *Iudaei* those whom he had previously dubbed *Hebraei* – even as he implicitly correlates the two groups genetically, he distinguishes them chronologically (Chapter 2). Jacob, he says, led the *Hebraei* into Egypt, and then his son Judah gave the *Iudaei* their name. This connection establishes a clear rationale for the relevance and applicability of Josephus’ exemplary recollection: Since the *Iudaei* are the descendants of the *Hebraei*, the actions of both historical groups have normative force. Josephus applies this force to his argument that both Hebrew and Jews had often preferred expedient servitude (*utilis servitus*) to useless liberty (*libertati inutili*). This interplay between *libertas et servitus*, here brilliantly correlated with the ideas of *utilis et inutilis*, was both a widely recognized argumentative trope in Roman antiquity (Chapter 8) and, as we have already seen, a favorite theme of Ps-Hegesippus and Josephus before him.⁶ What is surprising is the clear implication such a formulation has for the characterization of the first (and famous) *exemplum* Josephus introduces: Reasoning as he does, Josephus not so subtly insinuates that Jacob’s move to Egypt (Gen 46) was a *choice for servitus*, and therefore a capitulation of *libertas*, all for the sake of expedience; that is, survival

⁶ Mason 2016b, 28; Feldman/Gibbs 1996.

(*ne perirent fame*).⁷ This explication collapses a historical progression and actually mischaracterizes Jacob's choice to go to Egypt: *servitus* was not a factor in his decision. But arguments of exemplarity do not function by retaining strict narrative accuracy; rather, they coopt the authority of exemplary figures to make the points required by an argument.

Jacob's twelve sons, the patriarchs who emblemized the later twelve tribes of Israel – whom Josephus calls collectively the *praeclara illa generis nostri exordia* – constitute the most rhetorically powerful cohort one could garner in a Jewish conversational context. Using such a familial group, a kind of cohortative exemplarity, is reminiscent of the Roman habit of citing exemplary families, for example when Quintilian cites the Fabricii, Curii, Reguli, Decii, and Mucii as paradigms of virtue.⁸ But the idea that such noble families assumed voluntary *servitus* would have been unthinkable among Romans. It would have been offensive. Yet this is precisely the argument that Ps-Hegesippus' Josephus makes regarding the Jewish *patriarchae*. He attaches this argument to Joseph in another moment of striking exegetical ingenuity (and, perhaps, paradox): Josephus argues that in Egypt, while in a position of authority as signaled by his being *sublimis* on chariot and horses (cf. Gen 41:43, 46:29), Joseph chose to submit himself to authority (*subicere se in potestate maluit*) rather than return to the originary liberty of their race (*ad originis propriae libertatem redire*). Given the lofty position of Joseph in Egypt according to the Bible (Gen 41:39–45),⁹ Josephus' argument takes considerable interpretive liberty. But the purpose of *exempla* in Josephus' speech is to illustrate his point; Josephus is performing *eisegesis*, not *exegesis*. What is interesting here is that a Christian author is capable of and comfortable with so manipulating the biblical storyline, even if in the mouth of another. *De Excidio* 5.15 makes Joseph, like Jacob, an emblem for the putative habit of the ancient Hebrews to choose slavery over freedom when this was beneficial, a rather original reading of the scriptural tradition.

The final *exemplum* Josephus inserts, one coeval with Jacob and Joseph in the Bible, is Benjamin, youngest son of Jacob and the only full biological brother (i.e., *germanus*) to Joseph.¹⁰ The reworking of Benjamin's

⁷ Cf. Josephus *War* 5.382–84; Josephus discusses the fathers in Egypt, not the insinuations that appear in *De Excidio*.

⁸ Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 12.3.30: “Will anyone teach courage, justice, frugality, loyalty, continence, contempt for pain and death better than the Fabricii, the Curii, the Reguli, the Decii, and Mucii and innumerable others?” See Langlands 2015, 68.

⁹ Joseph is made the second in command to Pharaoh with otherwise unbridled authority.

¹⁰ On Benjamin's “pious” (*pia*) fraud, see Somenzi 2009, who lists this among the “Formule ambrosiane” in *De Excidio* (123).

biblical experience serves the same argument in which Jacob and Joseph have been enlisted (Josephus more or less passes over Judah, simply stating that he was “there” [*ibi*] in Egypt). Josephus recalls the story of Gen 44 (cf. *Antiquities* 2.124–59), where Joseph, then prince of Egypt, is visited by his brothers for grain during the famine. His brothers, who had betrayed him and sold him into slavery years before, did not recognize him. To test them, Joseph set up a ploy: A valuable drinking cup from his household was to be inserted into the grain-bag of his only true brother, Benjamin. Joseph’s servants then pursue and overtake his brothers as they are leaving Egypt, search each of their grain-bags, and “find” the “stolen” cup in Benjamin’s bag. Thereupon Benjamin is to be jailed and kept in Egypt. One of the great extended scenes of biblical drama ensues. At *De Excidio* 5.15.1, Josephus states that Benjamin agreed to Joseph’s trick (*consensit dolo*) and that he did so “because it was no reproach to serve those who were more powerful.” There are two ways of reading *consensit dolo* here: This either means that (1) Benjamin submitted himself to the judgment of Joseph and his servants, which is what happens in the biblical account, or (2) Benjamin *conspired in* Josephus’ trickery.¹¹ Either way, Benjamin’s putative reasoning is the same: Deference to those more powerful is *licet*, it is *non crimen*. In the traditional story, Benjamin had no choice in the matter. The imputation of a motive to him is simply a convenient addition allowing Josephus to corral Benjamin as an *exemplum* confirming his point.

“Unusual” is a good adjective to describe Ps-Hegesippus’ treatment of Jacob, Joseph, and Benjamin here. The idea that not only Jacob, not only Jacob and Joseph, but Jacob and Joseph *and Benjamin* made the decisions they did for the same reason – that is, to submit to servitude for the sake of well-being – is at least bold and original, if not a bit shocking. Ps-Hegesippus may be picking up Josephus’ reference to the migration of the fathers to Egypt in *War* 5.382, but there the lesson is different (see later). In fact, Ps-Hegesippus’ exemplary argument regarding Jacob, Joseph, (Judah), and Benjamin has no ancient parallels of which I am aware.¹² Joseph’s time in Egypt, for example, was much more commonly enlisted in ancient Jewish and Christian discussions of moral slavery.¹³ The idea of linking Jacob’s

¹¹ Compare the only other use of *consensus* language in *De Excidio* at 2.12.2.

¹² Compare the rather different interpretation of John Chrysostom discussed by de Wet 2015, 71. Chrysostom uses Joseph’s enslavement in Egypt as a lesson on the bodily passions (71).

¹³ De Wet 2015, 71n84, citing (among others) the *Testament of Joseph* (14.3–4, 106, 248), Philo’s *De Josepho*, Tertullian *De idololatria* 18, Ambrose *Off.* 2.5, and again John Chrysostom.

migration to Egypt, Joseph's position there, and Benjamin's incarceration as voluntary servitude motivated by a kind of "law of expedience" is a creative reading of Ps-Hegesippus' own invention.¹⁴

Josephus uses these first *exempla* of 5.15 to underline an overarching point that he makes in an opening rhetorical question: "When, O Jews, has this way of thinking gone well for you, or when with the Hebrews was expedient servitude not preferred to useless liberty?" Here Ps-Hegesippus makes explicit the link between Jew and Hebrew and has Josephus imply that the particular way of thinking (*sententia*) demonstrated by continued Jewish resistance to the Romans has *never* worked historically, whether with Jews or Hebrews. When facing the Romans, whose power Ps-Hegesippus characterizes as absolute, the philosophy of "live free or die" does not work; adhering to such a policy can have only one outcome.

But Josephus is far from finished with his argument for expedient servitude. He continues his stroll through Israel's exemplary past by enrolling the entire community of the Egyptian exile. He asserts that when Moses summoned the ancestors of the patriarchs (*hereditas eorum*) to go forth from Egypt, they desired to remain (cf. Exod 6:9, 12; 14:11–12; Josephus *Antiquities* 2.327). This leads *De Excidio*'s Josephus into a more or less totalizing pastiche of Hebrew-Jewish history, something that Ps-Hegesippus himself as author does in *De Excidio* 5.2.1 (Chapter 5).¹⁵ The Jews, Josephus submits, always preferred servitude when the alternatives seemed undesirable. In his run-through of Jewish history from the Exodus to the era of the Roman Empire, Josephus argues at each step along the way that the Jews always submitted to some more powerful nation.¹⁶ Then he shifts gears. He postulates that if each of these demonstrably greater nations submitted to Rome, then not only is this incumbent upon the Jews, but it is a privilege and status marker for them to do so.

This portion of the speech applies the experiences of patriarchal *exempla* across Jewish history as a way of framing and explaining the Jews' historical relations with various peoples. We find reference to the provision

¹⁴ On ancient perceptions of Jewish slavery, including those of Christians and Romans, see Friedman 2014.

¹⁵ See also Bay 2018.

¹⁶ Josephus' speech, superimposing Rome upon a historical list of empires and imbued with biblical valences, resonates with literature from Qumran as well as apocalyptic texts like 4 Ezra and Revelation, in which "we glimpse ... engagement with a distinctive imperial culture, not so neatly mapped onto Biblical models or onto the historical precedents provided by Assyrian, Babylonian, Achaemenid, Ptolemaic, or Seleucid rule"; Reed and Dohrmann 2013, 1.

of manna in the wilderness, when the Israelites are said to have longed to return to Egypt (Num 11:4–6), and recollection of the migration to Egypt in the time of Assyrian oppression (Isa 30:1–17; 31; 52:4). This displays Ps-Hegesippus' biblical knowledge, perhaps shifting from what Elizabeth Goldfarb calls "evidential" exemplarity to what she calls "ornamental."¹⁷ It also illustrates the seamless combination of biblical and nonbiblical history characteristic of *De Excidio*.¹⁸ Incidentally, Ps-Hegesippus' discussion of Jewish slavery to Assyrians, Medes, and Persians – among others – in sequence is strongly reminiscent of Tacitus' *Histories*, which do the same thing in the famous "Jewish Excursus" of Book 5.¹⁹

This historical survey not only serves the argumentative purposes of Josephus qua narrative character; it also helps Ps-Hegesippus inscribe his particular (Roman-Christian) perspective onto Jewish history. Ps-Hegesippus' presentation uses a biblical logic but also resonates with Roman perspectives like those evinced by Tacitus and Cicero.²⁰ The all-encompassing breadth of this sequential, panoptic overview by its very scope reiterates what is explicitly and implicitly communicated again and again: Submission to Rome is justified and even necessitated by Rome's complete dominance among peoples. The comparisons and rhetorical questions within Josephus' speech cast Romans as the conquerors of conquerors. Jewish refusal to submit to Rome is made to appear ridiculous. Several classical *exempla* even appear to drive home Ps-Hegesippus' pro-Roman perspective. The famous historical Roman enemy Pyrrus (also called Neoptolemus), his even more famous father Achilles (of *Iliad* fame), and the family to which they both belonged within Greek mythology – that of Aeacus; that is, the *Aeacides*²¹ – confirm Josephus' point: The most

¹⁷ Goldfarb 2015, 31–38, distinguishes *exempla* as "evidential," which are used "in support of an argument"; "ornamental," which "show off the erudition of the speaker or writer"; and "model," i.e., those "used in moral exhortation, or in education." We see all three of Goldfarb's categories at work in the course of this chapter.

¹⁸ Ps-Hegesippus' marshaling of biblical traditions, many rather obscure and uncommon, should be read at least in part as a demonstration of authorial competence. Rajak 2002, 32, makes the same point about Josephus' treatment of biblical tradition in the corresponding section of his *Jewish War* (5.379–91).

¹⁹ Tacitus *Hist.* 5.8.2: *dum Assyrios penes Medosque et Persas Oriens fuit, despectissima pars seruientium* ("While the East was under the dominion of the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians, the Jews were regarded as the meanest of their subjects"; LCL 249: 188–89). Ps-Hegesippus used Tacitus: Bloch 2002, 190–92; 2012, 380–83.

²⁰ Cicero *Prov.* 5.10 classes Jews together with Syrians as "people born to slavery" (*nationibus natis seruituti*). We do well to recall with this that Cicero was a major influence on Ps-Hegesippus' vocabulary, phrasing, and probably worldview.

²¹ See *ThLL*, s.v. *Aeacides*: 904.63–80; Hyginus *Fab.* 52.2–3; 97.15.

famous figures of the past bowed to Roman might along with everyone else. The Jews should too, Josephus suggests. Ps-Hegesippus takes the notion of Rome's divine sanction and unbeatable power, already present in Josephus' *War*, and gives it an outsized rhetorical force.

This historical survey is sandwiched by biblical *exempla* in the speech of *De Excidio* 5.15. Prefaced by discussion of a series of patriarchs, as already cited, it is followed by mention of the three kings that initiated ancient Israel's period of monarchy – Saul, David, Solomon. Here Ps-Hegesippus' favorite *exemplum*, David (Chapter 6), is sandwiched by his predecessor and successor. Josephus does not expatiate upon Saul's shortcomings, noting him only as the king Israel chose in place of God (cf. 1 Sam 8–9).²² David appears as the lesser among three evils, a king who, though he gave the nation rest (*requiesceret*) and was a mild master (*mitior dominus*), was a master nonetheless. Solomon saw the nation torn in two (*scissum in duo*), ushering in what is described as a serial succession of tyranny (*per longam seriem dominationis*) in which the Hebrew heritage (*hereditas*) was divided (*diuisa*). In one sense, Josephus' argument here is the same as it was at the beginning: The Jews and their ancestors have always served masters. But in another sense, Josephus' argument has changed. For here the masters to whom the ancestors submitted were kings of the people, Hebrews, Israelites, proto-Jews themselves. Given the preponderance of monarchy, oligarchy, and so on in the ancient Mediterranean, one wonders what alternative to such "servitude" Ps-Hegesippus might have in mind: Classical Athens or Republican Rome or even pre-monarchic, proto-democratic Israel? Rather, I suggest that these three regnal *exempla* bypass such questions, disarming them by ignoring them. Ps-Hegesippus aligns with biblical ideology when he characterizes the reigns of ancient Israelite kings, even these three early kings, as constituting oppression over (and thus servile status among) the people.²³ This rhetoric does not brook the objection that characterizing monarchy as *seruitus* might be a bit misleading; rather, it simply states the lesson to be drawn from the kings. Author, not tradition, dictates the meaning of *exempla*. Ps-Hegesippus can fit Saul, David, and Solomon to Josephus' argument, rather than vice versa. Thus, these figures show here that when the Jews were not serving other nations, they were always serving someone.

²² Most explicitly in 1 Sam 8:5, 7. Cf. *De Excidio* 3.17.1.

²³ See 1 Sam 8:10–18. Samuel describes how Israel's king will function as a master over them (8:17a: "and you shall be his slaves"). Cf. 1 Kgs 5:13; 12:16–17; 16:21; cf. Ezek 37:22; Gen 10:8–10, on Nimrod, the first monarch; and Bridge 2013. See further Nyquist 2013, 123–36, on 1 Sam 8 and other biblical passages.

As above, Josephus here again uses a short series of biblical *exempla* to ramp up to a broader, longer historical survey. He states his intention to walk his listeners through all of the Jews' historical captivities (*Vt transilium captiuitates*). He recounts how Cyrus returned the majority of the Jews to their lands and "sacred things" (2 Chr 36:22–23; Ezra 6:1–8; 5:13–17; 6:3, 14).²⁴ But, Josephus recalls, the *patres*, worn down by wars with the Persians, eventually made a pact (*societas*) with Rome *in spite of* the renown they had earned via the exploits of the Maccabees (*Machabaeorum triumphis nobiles*). Josephus' jump from Cyrus (600–530 BCE) to the times of the Maccabees and thereafter (167–37 BCE) is a jarring chronological leap. But here we encounter another feature of arguments based on *exempla*: thematic coherence can overcome anachronism. Josephus fast-forwards four hundred years in a way that makes the events appear contiguous, covering over centuries in silence to make it seem as though the Jews, right after they were returned to their ancestral land, turned to treat with the Romans. Because "Josephus" (i.e., Ps-Hegesippus) himself chooses the fodder from which his historical arguments are made (i.e., the *exempla*) and, conversely, which exemplary figures and moments are *not* included in the argument, he can force a historical lesson upon his "evidence" that otherwise might appear problematic, even suspect.

Next Josephus turns from historical generalization to biblical generalization, stating that "Holy Scripture contains [accounts of] the agreements of many embassies." Once again, history and *scriptura* are one and the same. Moreover, they teach the same lesson: Jewish history is characterized by capitulation and submission to others. Josephus' interpretation of Jewish rulers in the Roman period makes this case in a particularly interesting way. Josephus claims that the Jews moved from being slaves of the Persians (*Persarum serui*) to being friends of the Romans (*Romanorum amici*), once again passing over periods of, for example, Macedonian, Seleucid, and Ptolemaic dominance of Judea. Under Roman rule, Josephus attests that again the *populus* chose to submit itself (*obtemperaret*) to a *rex* rather than a high priest (*princeps sacerdotum*). Here Ps-Hegesippus refers to the breakdown of the priesthood among the Hasmoneans and the illegitimacy of the subsequent Herodian royal line, treated in greater detail at *De Excidio* 2.1.1–4, 2.12.3, and 2.13.1–9. Josephus is apparently meant to insinuate a qualitative distinction between submission to a high priest and submission to a king. But he quickly moves on from Jewish self-rule to avouch the Jews' historical

²⁴ Cf. Isa 45:1, where the Lord identifies Cyrus as his chosen messiah; cf. 44:28.

choice of submission to Rome: After the death of Herod and the defeat of Archelaus, when the *saeuitia* (“savageness”) of the Jewish kings (*reges*) had become *intolerabilis*, “you asked to come under a Roman Caesar.” Josephus recapitulates: “You handed yourselves over to the emperor, to whom all are subjects, so as to change to a more tolerable servitude.”

Josephus ends this first speech with a lengthy discourse on *natura* and the *lex naturae* that dictates to humans and animals a normative structure whereby the lesser submit to the greater (cf. Josephus *War* 5.367–68). His argument is essentially that “to serve in common with everyone else is a kind of *libertas*, because the compliance of those serving is dignified by the greatness of those who rule.” He casts the Romans, the *auctores libertatis*, in a highly positive light: They in fact do not institute *seruitus* but allow their subjects a great deal of *libertas*. In view of this, he urges the Jews to be realistic. He urges consideration of what is possible (*possibilitatis ratio*) rather than the pretense of solemn vows (*uotorum species*), especially in view of the fact that the Roman lines, the ruin of their ancestral homeland, and the destruction of the Temple all appear imminent. Josephus not so subtly compares Romans to lions, bears, leopards, eagles, hawks, rams, and lynxes, while equating Jews (like so many others) to the animals that submit to these – bulls, deer, goats, hawks, pigeons, and sheep. Adding these *exempla animalia* to the ancestral *exempla* he listed earlier, Josephus posits that it is “only natural” for the Jews to submit to Rome.

In *De Excidio* 5.15 we have seen how Ps-Hegesippus can construct a rhetoric that moves back and forth smoothly between Hebrew (and zoological) *exempla* and sweeping historical surveys. The mode of argumentation he constructs for Josephus is familiar in broad terms to scholarly methods today: One moves back and forth between particulars and generalities to draw conclusions from evidence and to draw evidence into support of conclusions. In terms of Hebrew *exempla*, Ps-Hegesippus selects two historical moments, the Egypt experience and the early monarchy, and populates each with three or four exemplary figures: Jacob–Josephus–Judah–Benjamin and Saul–David–Solomon, respectively. These representative groupings illustrate Josephus’ argument and, in the process, wield an interpretive hegemony by which scriptural figures and narratives act as proof-texts in service of one specific argument. Again, Ps-Hegesippus picks this argument up from his source, Josephus’ *Jewish War*. Still, the *exempla* that appear in *De Excidio* 5.15.1 are Ps-Hegesippus’ creation and they illustrate how a Christian historian (with a pro-Roman penchant) could use Hebrew heroes to think through Jewish history. In [Chapter 8](#) we concentrated on the classical/Roman

nature of the exemplarity at play in *De Excidio* 3.16–17 and only at the end mentioned the subtle Christianization of that discourse; conversely, in this chapter we have seen in 5.15 a repeat of several of those Roman themes – *libertas* and *seruitus*, for example. Now, in 5.16, we will see most clearly some underlying Christian themes within the exemplary rhetoric that Ps-Hegesippus imputes to Josephus.

CHRISTIANITY, EXEMPLARITY, AND WARFARE
WITHOUT WEAPONS: *DE EXCIDIO* 5.16

The end of *De Excidio* 5.15 records the response of Josephus' countrymen to his oratorical efforts: For his trouble, he gets spears thrown at him from atop the wall, and arrows shot. In his account, Josephus (*War* 5.375–76) states that he then moved from using “direct advice” (φανερὰ συμβουλαί) to recounting national history (ὁμόφυλοι ιστορίαι). Ps-Hegesippus had, of course, already cited some “national history” in his version of the earlier portion of the speech (understanding *De Excidio* 5.15–16 as their equivalents in *War* as one discourse). Moreover, he understood such history to be composed of the *testimonia* of *scriptura*. In *De Excidio* 5.16 we see Josephus introducing an even longer sequence of biblical-historical *exempla*, the longest in the entire work. In certain ways, it is also the most Christian.

We should begin by noting that, here again, Ps-Hegesippus takes Josephus' *War* as a model. Josephus' much shorter Greek version of this speech also cited a series of “superhuman exploits” of the fathers (πατέρων ἔργα δαιμόνια; *War* 5.377). In his survey, Josephus mentions fewer episodes and individuals than appear in *De Excidio* (by far), but he does provide a template for Ps-Hegesippus. In particular, Josephus *War* discusses (1) the showdown between Abraham/Sarah and Pharaoh, whom Josephus calls Neco (*War* 5.380–82; cf. Gen 12:10–20); (2) the migration to Egypt and the ten plagues of Egypt (*War* 5.382–83; cf. Gen 46–50 + Exod 1–12); (3) the Philistines' capturing of the Ark of the Covenant and its miraculous return (*War* 5.384–87; cf. 1 Sam 5–6); (4) Sennacherib's assault on Judah and the divine destruction of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (*War* 5.387–88; cf. 2 Kgs 19:35; Isa 37:36); (5) the Babylonian captivity and Cyrus' restoration of ἐλευθερία to the people (*War* 5.389; cf. 2 Kgs 24–25),²⁵ where he mentions King Zedekiah and

²⁵ Cf. 1 Chr 9:1; 2 Chr 36:6–14; Ezra and Nehemiah; Est 2:6; Ps 137; Isa 13; Jer 1:3; 25:8–14; Lamentations; Ezek 12:10–16; Mic 4:10; Zech 2:7; 6:10; also Matt 1:11–12, 17; Acts 7:43.

Jeremiah by name (*War* 5.391–93); and (6) the desolation of Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes (*War* 5.394). Hereafter Josephus reaches a fever pitch as he recounts with historical evidence the Jews' responsibility for the war, Rome's relative innocence, and the fact that *God had sided with the Romans* because of Jewish sacrilege and disobedience (*War* 5.395).

Despite the biblical density of the version of this speech in the *Jewish War*, Josephus mentions very few exemplary figures by name. As an ancient historian working within a tradition,²⁶ Ps-Hegesippus both relies upon and attempts to one-up his literary predecessor – seeing Josephus' list of *exempla* and raising him considerably (see [Appendix 1](#)). Ps-Hegesippus borrows a few of his *exempla* from Josephus' *War*; some are included of his own creative volition; but in *De Excidio* all bear the marks of Ps-Hegesippus' authorial hand. In like manner, *De Excidio* 5.16 records the same basic argument that one finds in the parallel speech in Josephus' *War*: namely, that Israelites/Hebrews/Jews have only ever succeeded by relying upon God, never by relying upon weapons and warfare.²⁷ Yet the scope and shape of Ps-Hegesippus' version of the argument are highly original and important to consider in their own right.

"Impudent people! *Now* do you think that divine aid is going to come to you, when you have mixed everything together in arms, violated the altars with fighting, demolished the defenses of the whole city?

Impudent people!" he said, "and forgetful of your sources of aid, you have readied shields and swords, and this against the Romans?! You have not been in the habit of prevailing with such weapons. For when was the victory of the Hebrews found in spear and sword? Remember whence you sprang forth and out of what you came, and how your forefathers conquered their enemies.

Impudent people! What a proponent you snatched away from yourselves when you requested foreign aid! Not in a multitude of people but in the fear of the Lord did father Abraham enter into Egypt and when he saw the chastity of his abducted wife taken captive, still he abstained from hostility, he assumed the weapons of pious prayer, he turned to the defender who could conquer one who was sleeping and, his enemy repulsed, restore his wife to him undefiled.

Sara was returned without arms, bearing a triumphal victory to her husband. Abraham was sleeping while Pharaoh was being tormented. Sara was afraid and Pharaoh denied the accusation, cast out the foreign woman and, convicted of his crime, he embellished the chastity which he had intended to despoil. He added gold and silver to Sara's purity, so that he might disavow any knowing complicity in the crime. He asked father Abraham that he might pray to the Lord on behalf of his family; for his house had become barren. Sara returned wealthier with her

²⁶ Marincola 1997, 258.

²⁷ Stated overtly at Josephus *War* 5.390; cf. Somenzi 2009, 110–15.

honor restored, Abraham came back holier, who gave a remedy for sterility as remuneration for his wife's purity.

But what shall I say of his son Isaac? He, likewise trusting in his paternal protection against the insolence of a powerful neighbor, did not lead forth an army arrayed for battle, though he certainly had a strong force of 318 domestic servants, which had overcome five kings in war, come away with the spoils, and restored the captive Lot to his uncle Abraham. His sword never left its sheath, but he assumed only patience against those who begrudged him, he responded with simplicity. Those who had threatened extermination came as suppliants, those who had not been willing to be neighbors demanded a pact of friendship.

I shudder to enumerate all the miracles of the fathers. The holy Jacob relinquished his paternal inheritance [left the country] when his brother Esau threatened him with parricide; he deserted his parents and, carrying with him only prayer as a provision for his journey and, by his merit, in foreign places, when he feared the designs of his brother and lacked the fellowship and aid of men, he encountered an assembly of angels. Guided, as he says, to the Fortress of God, he wrestled with the Lord and, as scripture says, he prevailed over God, who considered himself unequal to men.

What else did Moses do against the king of Egypt and his army and snakes except lift up a lone branch? O mighty branch, which covered the sky in darkness, which inundated the earth with rain, which dried up the sea of its waves! The Egyptians had surrounded the Hebrews—Moses prayed and did not fight. The sea was divided and the people crossed through, Pharaoh followed, and Moses prayed, positioned between the waves. Pharaoh was enveloped with his forces; Moses sang. Who, considering so many and such kind [of miracles], will not marvel and recognize that better arms are available to us in prayer than in bravery [in war]? For the former garners for itself the help of heaven, the latter the help of the body.

Joshua Naue, the same [one who was] disciple and successor of Moses, learned of these arms, which are not of the flesh but are mighty in God; he, as an imitator and near-equal of his master, turned back the waters of the Jordan, and the same man, when he beheld the impenetrable walls of the city of Jericho, commanded the priests to play their trumpets and the people to rejoice. When this was done, the walls fell immediately and the town was destroyed and all [who were in it] were killed, except those whom the faith of Rahab, the worthy prostitute, preserved from the destruction of that famous city.

In a similar vein, Gideon selected three hundred men for war, whom he commanded to carry forth not weapons, but mysteries: to hold jugs full of water in their left hands, torches in their right. The enemies, overwhelmed by such a sight, fled from there and a victory accrued to the Hebrews. The administration of sacred *religio* had been neglected by Eli the priest, the divine orders were abandoned. When battle was instigated by the Philistines, and the Hebrews were conquered, and the ark of God was captured, it was returned without any use of arms, by which evidence it was illustrated that arms are not able to conquer without *religio* but that *religio*, without arms, can.

King Hezekiah, when the people of the Jewish race had been confronted by the Assyrians, and when taunts were hurled against God by the voice of Rabsheka at the order of King Sennacherib, whereby he [Hezekiah] had gathered that ultimate

destructions were being threatened against the people, did not pay credence to these insinuations by returning words for words or weapons for weapons, but, rising up, he clothed himself in sackcloth as with a shield, covered his head with ashes for a helmet, and instead of a javelin he readied prayer. Prayer ascended, the angel descended. 185,000 Assyrians were cut down during the night. We counted the corpses—we did not see the slayer.

But I have passed over the affair of the five kings, whom, when they had gone to war without consulting the Lord and were passing through the desert, lack of water began to afflict grievously and to torment both themselves and their horses with thirst. Necessity constrained them to right their foregone duty. For the king of Israel had been negligent regarding the worship of God; nevertheless, being encouraged by others to seek the counsel of a prophet of God, he discovered that Elisha was not very far away from the areas in which they were passing time. He asked pitifully for the aid of prayer and a solution to their troubles. Granted that he was hated by the king of Israel—for he was being disingenuous and did not believe—nevertheless, he promised them both an abundant supply of water and a swift victory. Water began to flow through the desert and its streams began spontaneously to pour themselves out upon the ground without any rain.

Standing up, their adversaries whom, sure of victory, a deep sleep had pressed into relaxed diligence, suddenly saw waters running red, because the sun was shining on it, and thought that a battle had been fought amongst the peoples of the kings, whose blood had then saturated the ground. And then they hastened to run to the plunder without order and without a plan, with one man outstripping another. Running thus headlong into the midst of the enemy they were trenched in and killed, giving themselves up to a massive slaughter. Thus did the holy prophet equally dispel both thirst and fear from our fathers.

He offered the same kind of help against starvation. For when Samaria was under siege and the king of Israel remained closed up within it, a severe hunger pressed hard [upon him], so that he would not abstain even from the most abominable forms of nourishment. The prophet, coming forward because of the vileness of such suffering and because of the declaration of the king, who believed that the famine exposed the prophet's negligence, responded: 'On the following day you will see more than enough food and resources.' He said to the one who did not believe his announcement, that he would not see it because he did not believe, yet the faithfulness of the promises would remain.

Then, unexpectedly by night within the Syrian camps the neighing of horses, the din of chariots, the rumbling of quadrigae, and the sound of armed troops were heard so as to strike fear into the victors because many and strong gentes had come to the Hebrews' aid and were bearing down on them, or so they thought, and they made haste to remove themselves from the danger by flight. The night hastened their decisions and increased their terror. When the Syrians had fled, all of the supplies which had come into their tents were discovered the following day. Abundance produced benefit, benefit enlivened faith, yet truly death seized the benefit from the one who did not believe, though this did not impede the common relief.

Therefore this makes clear that many leaders of the fathers achieved victory when they hardly engaged in battle, and that others were superior in war, those to whom, while they were deliberating, the right to wage war was permitted by an

oracle. And then again, Amalek was conquered when Moses but raised his hands, Joshua Nave conquered when the sun stood still, and Gideon conquered after he had tested his combatants with water, and even Samson [conquered] when he preserved his hair untouched, and Samuel conquered, but only when he had thought to establish a stone as a helper. David triumphed when he had united in marriage by the prophetic mysteries with Bathsheba—that is, ‘Daughter of the Sabbath’—, and he even prevailed in civil war, because he shunned its introduction and did not instigate it. For nothing is more abominable in civil war than the one who was capable of instigating it.

Asaph also conquered in war, but thereafter, when his men were desperate because they were inferior in number, he said that it made no difference whether they were few or many, since God could make a few who feared him stronger than many; certainly he was a man strong in faith, if only he had persevered to the end. A woman also, who had preserved faith in God, conquered in arms.

And verily Saul was conquered, because he did not observe the precepts of God; Josiah was wounded, because he went forth against the enemy contrary the command [of the Lord]—holy in other regards, he was snatched away lest he behold the captivity which was owed to our sins. Neco shouted: ‘I have not been sent against you,’ bearing witness to his faith, but he [Josiah] turned on him, just as Amaziah had done before with a partnership formed from a broken society. For he had been warned by a man of God to dismiss those whom he had hired into an alliance of war with a hundred talents of silver, if he wanted to prevail. To him, demurring to let go such a sizeable sum, the prophet responded that the Lord had much more from which he could again restore his silver to him. Relying upon this, he called off the mercenaries he had summoned and he conquered with fewer troops, lest the credit for such a victory should in fact not be attributed to God; but on that very spot the victor offered sacrifices to the same idols which he had captured, as if he had conquered by the beneficence of those whom he had brought back with the captured plunder.

Zedekiah himself, amidst the then impending ruin of the fatherland, after he was met by the prophet Jeremiah while being hard pressed by the siege of the enemy so that he would not fear to leave the city—who believed that he would be victorious if he would submit to heavenly commands, or would become a captive if he decided to defend [the city]—cheated himself and his people by infidelity. The populace of the Jews was carried away by the Assyrians into Babylon, and those who remained deliberated over whether they should betake themselves, who were sitting there idly, to Egypt. The Lord commanded through Isaiah the prophet and others that they be preserved within the *imperium* of one race, lest a double captivity compound their trouble. Truly they, after receiving the oracles of God, were made captives of two races, who impatiently demanded to be free of the yoke of one race. And thus they remained exiles in Egypt.

But truly, those who were led away into Assyria, when the period of captivity had been completed which the Lord had established for the sins of the people, afterward when under Cyrus’ reign they obtained permission to return, they returned with gifts. The Temple of God was renovated by the resources of Cyrus and Darius and by the gifts of other Persians. And the very ones who had overthrown it gave the provision for its repair, and they even restored the priestly election and

they supported the carrying out of religious duties. But truly we, while the priests competed among themselves and solicited the Parthians to confer widely-recognized honor upon them, [we] made a commercial business out of *religio*.

Why should we complain of the Babylonians? We know our inferiority by experience. They restored to us the right to practice our *religio*, they reinstated the election of priests and we fled from them to the Persians. They entrusted the priestly honors into our power, we made them into taxes for the Babylonians. What shall I add to the fact that the holy vessels have been made bloody, that holy thresholds are soaked with blood, that the half-ruined gables of the Temple still stand? It is less the anger of God that encircles us than our strife. The former made us captives, the latter made us sacrilegious; the former dispersed the Jews, but the latter sustains them.

Consider together whether it is discernible what differentiates our captivity and our sedition: our captivity gave the Gentiles a part in our *religio*, yet our sedition deprived the Jews of the privilege of *religio*. But who introduced the Romans into Judea, if not the strife of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus? Who introduced Sossius if not Herod? Who introduced Antonius if not Sossius? Who asked Caesar to be their king if not you?! Who other than you removed Antipater from his reign and [thus removed] the freedom [you had] in Antipater? And I am not leaving out, nor do I deny that Florus governed wickedly among you. But that complaint was to be carried away to the Romans, not brought forth in arms.

You despised Nero. But after him came Vespasian, who, friendly by nature, could have been inclined to be even friendlier still because he had taken up his command in Judea, or, if his piety did not move you, at the very least his virtue ought to have pushed you to take thought amongst yourselves. For how would he who spared Josephus not have spared you? For to whom ought he to have been more hostile than to me? Who erected greater bulwarks against the Romans? Who wanted all the more zealously to fight on behalf of his country after a decision for war seemed good to you?

Certainly I did not approve of initiating wars, but once it was begun I did not desert it. The ashes which have covered the fighting which took place in the city of Jotapata bear witness to this, that I did not desist from war until after the ruin of this city; that I hid myself as long as I was able in the sepulchre of an over-turned city; that I preferred starvation than to hand myself over to the Romans; that I sought to flee to you but was apprehended, not having come out willingly; that I preferred to perish with my men, but Caesar spared me; that I preferred to be further endangered with you, not because I approved this plan, but because I elected to share in danger with you.

Nevertheless, thanks be to God that I did not fall into being a party to such crime, lest I be reckoned an inciter of seditions, or lest, because I was not able to be embroiled in these things, I even have the choice to shun such parricide from my hand or else fill [them] with death; and certainly, let me not see my most holy mother torn apart in front of me and the innards of my relatives poured out. These things are certainly to be lamented, but it is still more tolerable for them to be suffered than to have done them. What, then, are you still waiting for? Not signs from the ancestors? These have not been merited by you, nor those favors surrounding the worship of God.

The infidelity of the Assyrians is not that of the Romans, they who, having received a payoff to leave, broke faith, deciding not to depart but to attack more fiercely. What else, since we discern from how things transpire the movement of the divine will, but that God has clearly opposed the Jews.

Finally the Siloan stream, which had dried up before the war, along with all the streams of springs outside the city, which had long since ceased to flow, so that water was not present for our use unless sought at a price, have now returned for their use and flow back to Titus as he arrives. Rich streams overflow and thus all things are filled with replenishing waters, so that not only is there an abundance to drink for this large army, but also even for their warhorses and pack animals and for every single cow, and an abundance of water is not lacking for the watering of their gardens, such that you would think the rivers of the earth more bountiful, as though the elements were exerting themselves on behalf of Roman victory.

We remember earlier prodigies, which also at that time preceded the captivity of our city: water ceased toward the Jews and poured itself back toward the enemies, lest the siege be impeded by thirst. No wonder that divine favor has departed from the Jews, who have been enclosed by so many shameful things.²⁸

To be sure, a good man flees his home and deserts his house, full of horror, if he learns that some crime has been committed in it—he refuses to be associated with a dishonorable household, and he abhors the iniquities of those who abide there; and shall we doubt concerning the highest and immaculate God, that he would abhor contact with such shameful things, and that he would turn away from such death-dealing enormities, lest he be delayed within the marketplaces of murderers, he who commanded that Dathan and Abiram be separated from the innocent, because they had challenged Moses and Aaron for claiming the priestly office, lest either their stain contaminate the pious by their proximity to the wrong-doers or their punishment engulf them.

But why do I tarry so long with speeches, when an abundance of quaking and groanings are poured out all around and destruction draws near to the Temple? Whose eyes are able to behold this, whose sense able to bear it, whose souls able to endure it? O people harder than rocks, more unbending than iron, who amidst such portents of human affairs are still fighting amongst yourselves as though toward some emulation of virtue from wickedness and, what is worse, you yourselves are tearing down your country and are increasing its ruin. Now at last, turn back, at last return to your senses, judge and see the beauty of the country which you are handing over.

What a city, what a Temple, what habitations of holy things and interiors of sacred things, what works of the prophets are being eviscerated by your hands. Is not anyone who brings flames and sparks fires and introduces firebrands into this place moved by any compassion? The stiffness of cliffs would give way, if they could feel. Assuredly, even very many insensate things in the absolute harshest of circumstances feign the appearance of sense so that crags tremble and drops of water flow out as though sweating blood. But you persist, immovable, so that what better thing will survive after this, what is the more fitting thing which you are holding onto?

²⁸ It is as if the sins of the Jews have built a metaphorical wall between them and God. My thanks to Cyrill Ackermann for pointing this double *entendre* out to me.

Finally, if these things did not move you, which are more preferable to the pious, at the very least have mercy upon your families, place before your eyes the killings of your sons, whether by iron or by hunger, which are far more bitter, the enslavement of your wives and daughters, to whom there will either come liberty, maintained by agreement to surrender, or captive servitude following the overturning of the city.

Consider, while it remains possible, lest you leave behind worse things after death than you contrived before death. Nor am I myself free from such danger. I myself have considered this, because with you at the same time my most holy mother and my beloved wife, of a noble line and once-famous house, are imperiled. And perhaps on account of these relatives of mine you think to persuade me. Kill them, and in addition accept my blood as recompense. Freely I give over this price of your salvation if, following me, you can be wise.”

De Excidio 5.16.1²⁹

Here again Josephus in *De Excidio* starts much as he does in *War*. In the latter he addresses the Jews “ὦ δειλοί” (“alas, wretches”) and calls them ἀμνήμονες (“unmindful”) of their own “true allies” (*War* 5.376). In *De Excidio* 5.16.1 Josephus begins by addressing the Jews as “impudent” *temerarii* – thrice – and, like in the *War*, pronounces them *immemores* of their allies (*auxiliorum*). He then paraphrases Josephus’ argument as found in the *War* as the speech’s programmatic question: “You have not been in the habit of prevailing with such weapons. For when was the victory of the Hebrews found in spear and sword?” The anticipated answer is: never.

Josephus hearkens to Hebrew beginnings and challenges his listeners to recall any time when the *patres* dealt with *hostes* in the conventional manner. The implication is that they didn’t. This leads Ps-Hegesippus to recall the Abraham–Sarah–Pharaoh debacle, which in *De Excidio* is far more detailed than in *War*.³⁰ In enlisting some of the early *exempla* of the Jewish Scriptures, Ps-Hegesippus’ interpretive creativity emerges. *Pater Abraham* appears a paragon of virtue inasmuch as he abstained from hostility (*bello abstinuit*) even when his wife’s *pudicitia* was threatened,³¹ an action that evinced fear of God (*timore dei*).³² Instead, he turned to prayer (*oratio*). In this Ps-Hegesippus imputes to Abraham something at

²⁹ CSEL 66.1: 323–33.

³⁰ Ps-Hegesippus expands on two stories that are conflated in Josephus, that of Sarah’s abduction (Gen 12) and that of the rescue of Lot (Gen 14), the only place where Abram’s 318 “soldiers” are mentioned. Compare Josephus *War* 5.380–82, where Josephus goes beyond the biblical account by having Pharaoh carry off Sara during an invasion of Palestine, which Rajak 2002, 32, calls a “traditional embellishment.” See further Bay 2021d, 41–47.

³¹ *Pudicitia* was a key virtue among Roman *exempla*; see Valerius Maximus 6.1.praef–13.

³² See Gen 12:16 (LXX), Ambrose *Abr.* 1.9, and Somenzi 2009, 116.

which the biblical narrative of Gen 12 does not even hint: Nowhere there does Abraham (still “Abram” at that point) pray about anything.³³ The only time prayer is mentioned in the biblical tradition is in the parallel account of Gen 20, where Abraham, as he had done previously, has had Sarah claim to be his sister to avoid some expected danger (20:2). But there, Abraham and Sarah are dealing with Abimelech King of Gerar, not Pharaoh of Egypt, and when Abraham does pray, it is only *after* Sarah has been returned to him and it is on behalf of Abimelech (20:17–18), whose household God had made barren as chastisement for taking Abraham’s wife. Josephus mentions this detail further into his discussion.

That Ps-Hegesippus is conflating the tales of Gen 12 and Gen 20 may be discerned from details in his account that appear only in Gen 20 with Abimelech.³⁴ Other details jibe better with the account of Gen 12.³⁵ Ps-Hegesippus taps both stories in rendering his *exemplum* of Abraham and Sarah; yet, like the earlier Christian historian Julius Africanus in his *Chronicle* (frag 26 1–6), Ps-Hegesippus only mentions Pharaoh, not Abimelech.³⁶ This particular example, because it employs as *exemplum* a scriptural story that emerges in two nearly identical versions in the Hebrew Bible,³⁷ exposes another facet of the adaptability of *exempla* in *De Excidio*: Stories may overlap and intermix because details are conformable to the exemplary lesson to be illustrated; any need for absolute consistency fades to the background as Ps-Hegesippus wields *exempla* without regard for verbatim accuracy.

³³ Indeed, if anything, Abraham appear *faithless* in the story, where he insists that Sarah call herself his sister lest he come into danger (Gen 12:11–13). Pharaoh takes Sarah, and then calls Abraham out for his deception (12:18–19).

³⁴ Namely (1) the idea that Sarah’s rescue was effected while others were sleeping (Gen 20:3–7); (2) the claim of innocence regarding Sarah, which only Abimelech offers, and the accompanying implication of crime or wrongdoing, which only appears in the latter episode (Gen 20:4–5, 16); (3) the statement that a monetary reward was given specifically as a guarantee of Sarah’s chastity, which only Gen 20 relates (20:16, where it is silver; cf. Josephus *War* 5.381–82, where it is silver and gold). See further Bay 2021d.

³⁵ Namely (1) Ps-Hegesippus’ description of Pharaoh being tormented (*torquebatur*) fits with Gen 12:17, where it is said that the Lord afflicted (נָגַף/ἥτασεν/*flagellauit*) Pharaoh along with his household, while for Abimelech it is the women’s wombs within his household that require healing; (2) the statement that Pharaoh “cast out the foreign woman” (*eiciebat alienam*), i.e., Sarah, which corresponds better to Gen 12:20 – “And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away (ἔθηκεν/συνπροπέμψα/*deduxerunt*) with his wife and all that he had” – than to Gen 20:14, where Abimelech is said to have “restored” (ἔθηκεν/ἔδωκεν/*reddidit*) Sarah to Abraham.

³⁶ From George Syncellus; Wallraff, Adler, Roberto, and Pinggéra 2007, 58–59.

³⁷ In fact, in three: in Gen 26 Isaac has a run-in with Abimelech virtually identical to his father’s.

It is here that we run into the first of several pieces of evidence central to the present chapter's argument. Ps-Hegesippus' description of Abra(ha)am's response to Pharaoh (//Abimelech) enlists an overtly Christian idiom when it refers to the weapons of pious prayer (*orationis pie arma*). Analogizing between military implements and modes of religious practice became a hallmark of early Christianity early on with Paul, who in 2 Corinthians refers to "the weapons of righteousness" (τὰ ὀπλά τῆς δικαιοσύνης/*arma iustitiae*; 6:7) and states that "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses" (10:4).³⁸ Indeed, Adolf Harnack took great exception to the fact that early Christian authors such as Paul, Ignatius, and Cyprian drew metaphors for Roman military experience and applied them to their own contexts of writing.³⁹ By late antiquity, the weaponization of religiosity was firmly entrenched within Christian discourse, gaining particular cachet within the ascetic-monastic milieu.⁴⁰ The way this trope is employed at *De Excidio* 5.16.1 is subtle – there is nothing inherently Christian in the idea as articulated there. Nevertheless, given its precedent in early Christian tradition – especially the linguistic pairing of *oratio* and *arma* within Christian Latinity⁴¹ – we may read this statement as Ps-Hegesippus' Christian vernacular slipping into the exemplary discourse of *De Excidio* 5.16. Nor have we seen the last of this trope in this speech.

The sequentialized nature of Ps-Hegesippus' *exempla* in *De Excidio* 5.16 is anticipated by the two short lists of 5.15 (Jacob–Joseph–Judah–Benjamin, Saul–David–Solomon). Such *Listenwissenschaft* continues when, following the Abraham–Sarah story, Josephus moves on to Abraham's heir Isaac. Here Ps-Hegesippus seems to recall the substory of Gen 26:26–31 where Isaac, settled in Gerar, makes a truce with Abimelech. Just previous to this the biblical

³⁸ 2 Cor 10:3–6; Betz 1972, 68–69.

³⁹ von Harnack 1982 (1905).

⁴⁰ Athanasius, a rough contemporary of Ps-Hegesippus, codifies prayer and other practices as spiritual weapons in his *Life of Antony* (e.g., 20.3); Brakke 2006, 43. Another late fourth-century example comes with the life of Martin of Tours (c. 316–397). Martin is reputed in Sulpicius Severus' *Life* and *Dialogues* to have combatted idols and pagan temples by the power of prayer, resulting in their literal destruction by lightning, storms, etc.; Kristensen 2014, 271; cf. John Chrysostom *Hom. Rom.* 11.3 (PG 9: 587); Kalleres 2015, 88ff.

⁴¹ Early on see Tertullian *De oratione* 29: *Oratio murus est fidei, arma et tela nostra aduersus hostem, qui nos undique obseruat*; then, the most salient comparandum for Ps-Hegesippus: Ambrose *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII* 8.48 (*arma orationis*); *De uiduis* 8.49 (*arma ecclesiae fides, arma ecclesiae oratio est, quae aduersarium uincit*); cf. Cicero *Div.* 2.26, where oratory (*oratio*) is compared to an "excursion of light arms" (*leuis ... armaturae excursio*).

storyline describes the following: Isaac's brief run-in with Abimelech, when he said that Rebekah was his sister and not his wife, just as Abraham had done (26:7–11); Isaac's accrual of wealth and power, whereupon Abimelech bid Isaac leave his lands due to his strength (26:12–16); and Isaac's sporadic troubles with locals over ancestral lands and wells (26:17–25). The reference to *insolentia* therefore apparently refers to Abimelech's approach to Isaac again at 26:26: Isaac asks why Abimelech has come, given that he "hates" him and had previously sent him away. Thereupon Abimelech, along with his advisor and his military commander, requests a pact with Isaac given the latter's now-considerable strength (26:28–29). Isaac accepts (26:30). The biblical narrative provides little suggestion that the request is to be read as arrogant or provocative or inappropriate. Rather, Ps-Hegesippus again rewrites a biblical story to align it with an exemplary lesson.

So also with the 318 soldiers, whose only biblical mention is in Gen 14:14–16 when Abram rescues his nephew Lot from a local alliance of kings that has captured him. It was not Isaac who commanded such a force, but his father, and relatively early in his life at that. Ps-Hegesippus' account clashes with and/or ignores the biblical details.⁴² In so doing Ps-Hegesippus has Josephus assume that the exact same men who constituted Abra(ha)m's household army early in his sojourn west of Mesopotamia would still have been Isaac's on-hand militia so many decades later.⁴³ Ps-Hegesippus thus changes considerably the narrative of Gen 26 in order to fit Isaac into the mold of the ethical emphasis of *De Excidio* 5.16: Imputing *insolentia* to Abimelech, crediting Isaac with a particular number of armed troops (using a number not insignificant to other early Christian writers),⁴⁴ and then equipping Isaac with a sword and attributing *patientia* and *simplicitas* to him in the face of a neighbor

⁴² While Ps-Hegesippus claims that Abra(ha)m's army had conquered five *reges* in war, the tradition implies their engagement with four, not five: at Gen 14:8–9 we read that (1) the King of Sodom, (2) the King of Gomorrah, (3) the King of Admah, (4) the King of Zeboiim, and (5) the King of Bela/Zoar went to war against (1) Chedorlaomer King of Elam, (2) Tidal King of Goiim, (3) Amraphel King of Shinar, and (4) Arioch King of Ellasar; that is, "four kings against five" (14:9); Abraham fought the latter four, but Ps-Hegesippus may be drawing on Philo *Abr.* 229–35. Cf. Josephus *Antiquities* 1.171–78; Julius Africanus *Chron.* frag 26 9–11. See also Bay 2021d.

⁴³ Cf. Philo *Det.* 13–14, assuming that these servants (and others) would have been available to Jacob, Isaac's son.

⁴⁴ Jewish and Christian tradition had much to say about these 318 servants of Gen 14 and their exact number in particular; see *Epistle of Barnabas* 9.7; Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* 6.11; Ambrose *Abr.* 1.3.15; Athanasius *Epistle to Afros* 2; Stanglin 2018, 25–27; Dawson 1992, 154, 175.

who had threatened “extermination” (*exterminandum denuntiauerant*) certainly make Isaac appear a model of temperance and nonviolence.⁴⁵ But this bears only nominal resemblance to the biblical story. Isaac looks instead like a Christian proto-saint whose actions resonate with values found in, for instance, Tertullian’s *De patientia* or, later, Augustine’s *De patientia* or Prudentius’ *Psychomachia*.⁴⁶ At *De Excidio* 5.16 biblical details again bend to lessons of nonviolence, faith, and prayer.

After the Abraham–Isaac progression, Josephus “shudders to enumerate” how many *mirabilia* occurred among the *patres*. But enumerate them he does. His feigned apprehension, an oratorical guise, precipitates the continuation of *De Excidio* 5.16 into an extensive sequence of scriptural *exempla*. Ps-Hegesippus has Josephus next recall *Iacob sanctus*, whose departure from his homeland after deceiving his brother Esau (see Gen 27–28) is sanctified when Josephus states that prayer (*oratio*) was the only provision (*uiaticum*) he took for his journey. He casts Jacob’s migration – a tense and solitary affair in the biblical story – as blessed since it involved the encounter not only with an assembly of angels (*angelorum concilium*; see Gen 31:1–2; cf. 28:12)⁴⁷ but also with God himself, whom Jacob wrestled and defeated (Gen 32:22–32). Ps-Hegesippus at this point seems only to be listing *mirabilia*, though he may mean to imply that Jacob’s wrestling match with God was an endeavor of prayer. That would fit with his ensuing theme.

The next *exemplum*, Moses, is remembered for his struggle “against the King of Egypt and his army and snakes.” Josephus states that Moses simply held up a lone staff (*solam uirgam*), which he also calls a “mighty staff” (*o potens uirga*) in that it hid the sky with clouds (Exod 10:22), inundated the earth with rain (Exod 9:23), and dried up the waves of the sea (Exod 14:16, 21–23). The Red Sea episode then becomes a key site at which Josephus can establish the primary thrust of his argument.⁴⁸ Moses’ decision to pray (*orabat*) and not to fight (*non dimicabat*) becomes a strong traditionary proof that prayer (and song?), not war,

⁴⁵ Ussani (CSEL 66.1: 324) correlates the language of Abraham’s praying (*ad dominum deprecatur*) with the Vulgate’s terminology in Ps 141:1 (142:1): ... *ad dominum deprecatus sum*. Ps-Hegesippus’ description of Isaac in terms of *patientia* may or may not correspond to Philo’s etymology of Rebekah’s name in these terms (*De plantatione* 169), a linguistic datum also picked up by Ambrose (*Iac.* 2.14); Somenzi 2009, 91n144.

⁴⁶ See references and notes on *patientia* and *simplicitas* in Pelttari 2019.

⁴⁷ That Ps-Hegesippus here recalls Gen 32:1–2 is suggested by the fact that he mentions immediately thereafter that Jacob was led *ad castra dei*, “to the camp of God,” presumably a nod to Jacob’s statement in Gen 32:2 that “This is God’s camp!” (מחנה אלהים זה / παρεμβολή θεοῦ αὐτῇ/*castra dei sunt haec*).

⁴⁸ Cf. Ambrose *Off.* 3.2; Somenzi 2009, 111.

marks the appropriate way for Hebrews/Jews in particular to behave, even toward oppressive foreign powers: There are simply “better weapons” (*meliora arma*) available through prayer than through physical force. And Josephus makes this argument in the form of a rhetorical question: Considering all these examples he lists, who could fail to see this (*non intellegat*)? Here again Josephus equates *oratio* and *arma*, preferring prayer to any outward display of *uirtus* inasmuch as prayer enlists *diuinum auxilium*, but *uirtus* only *auxilium corporis*.

Next Josephus brings forward Joshua, whom one would think to be a risky *exemplum* for Josephus here inasmuch he represents an apparent challenge to the arguments for weaponless warfare put into Josephus’ mouth. Joshua, after all, represents the most active and successful era of Hebrew antiquity in military terms. He fought, and won, with real weapons throughout his career. However, Josephus with expert precision stresses certain aspects of Joshua’s legacy so that even his most famous battle is made to emphasize not martial combat but divine might. The episode of the miraculous stopping of the Jordan (Josh 3:15–17; Ps 114:3)⁴⁹ and of Jericho’s famous downfall (Josh 6) are both made to communicate the superiority of “these weapons” (*haec arma*) – that is, those of faith and prayer – over those of conventional warfare. By forefronting the musical agency of the priests and the “rejoicing” of the people, and then putting the bloody aftermath in the passive voice, Ps-Hegesippus emphasizes reliance upon divine aid in the Jericho episode and the Jordan River miracle. In addition, he adds a female *exemplum* to his list, Rahab, whose *fides* becomes an emblem of divine blessing, here demonstrated by her survival.⁵⁰

In Josh 2 and 6, Rahab famously avoided destruction with the rest of the city of Jericho by striking a deal with two Israelite spies surveying the city: By helping them avoid capture and death, Rahab procured a guarantee of life for herself and her household, resulting in an effective conversion.⁵¹ At *De Excidio* 5.16.1, that Rahab and those saved along with her survive the destruction (*excidium*) of an *urbs/ciuitas* makes her example particularly poignant both for the hearer of Josephus’ speech, who is poised in the narrative to witness the destruction of another “famous city” (*memorata*

⁴⁹ Ussani cites Ps 114:3 as the only referent here, apparently alluding to the proximity of Ps-Hegesippus’ Latin to that of the Vulgate (Ps 113:3): ... *fugit Iordanis conuersus est retrorsum*.

⁵⁰ On Rahab here, cf. Heb 11:31 and Ambrose *Hel.* 74; also [Somenzi 2009](#), 124–25.

⁵¹ Josh 6:25: “However, Rahab the prostitute and her father’s household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.”

urbs), and for the reader of *De Excidio*, who is reading a work expressly concerned with the *excidium* of a particular *urbs/ciuitas*, namely Jerusalem. Finally, in this Joshua section we see again the infusion of Christian language into the use of Hebrew *exempla*: The collocation of “faith” and “Rahab the harlot” recalls Heb 11:31,⁵² though Ps-Hegesippus surpasses the latter’s laudatory perspective by referring to her as a “good harlot” (*bona meretrix*). More centrally, the statement that the *arma* that Joshua “learned about” as Moses’ successor and student “are not carnal but are mighty in God” ([*quae*] *sunt non carnalia sed fortia deo*) clearly recalls (again) 2 Cor 10:4, where Paul says that “the weapons (τὰ ὄπλα/*arma*) of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful (οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ/*non carnalia sed potentia Deo*) for the destruction of for- tresses.”⁵³ As the exemplary argument of *De Excidio* 5.16.1 progresses, the thrust of Josephus’ argument takes on an increasingly Christian flavor.

As in Heb 11:30–32, the next *exemplum* mentioned after Joshua/Rahab is Gideon.⁵⁴ Having followed a cluster of themes from the patriarchs of Genesis through the signal events of the Books of Exodus and Joshua, Ps-Hegesippus continues with Gideon’s story from the Book of Judges. Josephus blends aspects of *fides*/reliance upon God and *mirabilia*/miraculous–divinely sanctioned success: Gideon’s soldiers are said to have been charged with carrying forth *mysteria* rather than *arma*, perhaps a semi-symbolic reading of the *hydrias aquae plenas* and *faces* that Gideon’s men held during their paradoxical victory of Judg 7.⁵⁵ The tools wielded are

⁵² Heb 11:31: “By faith Rahab the harlot (πίστει Ραάβ ἡ πόρνη/*fide Raab meretrix*) did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.” Given that 11:30 recalls the Jericho wall destruction – “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days” – it is tempting to see in *De Excidio* 5.16 an overt engagement with Heb 11. Cf. Matt 1:5, where Rahab is remembered within the lineage of Jesus, and Jam 2:25, where Rahab is said to have been “justified by works” given her heroic actions at Jericho.

⁵³ See Somenzi 2009, 121, who notes that Ambrose and Ps-Hegesippus share the language of *fortia deo*; cf. *potentia deo* in Rufinus, Paulinus of Nola, Hilary of Poitiers, Augustine, Jerome, and Cassian.

⁵⁴ See Judg 7:16 and, with footnotes and references, Somenzi 2009, 126.

⁵⁵ In Judg 7 the Lord directs Gideon to reduce his considerable force to a comparatively tiny garrison of 300 (7:7–8) while preparing him to face the Midianites and Amalekites. Gideon then divided his 300 men into companies and put trumpets in their hands along with empty pitchers and torches inside the pitchers (7:16); later, after blowing the trumpets and smashing the jars they were holding, one reads that the men “held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing” (7:20). This is slightly different than what we find in *De Excidio* 5.16.1, where jugs of water and torches are held in opposite hands, with trumpets never mentioned.

actual physical implements, and they are used in a wartime setting, but to call them instruments of war would be a stretch. Rather, Ps-Hegesippus insinuates, they are the kind of weapons appropriate for God's people; and it is by their use that *uictoria* came to the Hebrews in the time of Gideon.⁵⁶

After the Gideon episode, Josephus moves on in his speech to near the end of the legendary "time of the Judges." He recalls how the priest Eli⁵⁷ neglected the precepts of sacred *religio* (1 Sam 2:12–25).⁵⁸ With the divine commands abandoned (*diuina imperia deserebantur*), the Hebrews were conquered by foreigners (*allophyli*) – that is, Philistines – and the Ark of the Covenant captured (1 Sam 4).⁵⁹ The proximity of the statement that "the Hebrews were conquered" (*uicti Hebraei*) to the previous statement that *uictoria* came to the Hebrews in Gideon's time – the two statements are separated by only one short sentence – illustrates a converse correlation. Josephus' argument is straightforward: Dependence upon divine aid results in success; neglect of divine command results in abject failure. This binary truth is reinforced by a description of the denouement of the captured ark episode: After the ark of God was captured it was restored to Israel without force of arms (*sine ullis armis*). This event is made to instantiate a timeless truth: "by this evidence it was clearly shown that arms cannot achieve victory without *religio* and that *religio* can achieve victory without arms." This *sententia* encapsulates the speech of *De Excidio* 5.16.1.

Here Ps-Hegesippus has added *religio* to *fides* and *oratio* on one side of an equation whose other side is represented by the conventional, violent use of *arma*: *religio/fides/oratio* > *arma*. While *religio* and *fides* and *oratio*

⁵⁶ Note that in Ps-Hegesippus' account, the enemies of the Hebrews flee at the sight (*species*) of Gideon's ruse, whereas in Judg 7:22 it is the *sound* of the trumpets that precedes the Lord's throwing the enemy ranks into confusion.

⁵⁷ Eli is introduced in terms of his laziness – the sacred ministrations are said to have been neglected "by the indolence of the priest Eli" (*Heli sacerdotis neglegentia*). This construction grammatically removes Eli as an *active* example proper, inasmuch as he exists in the narrative as an object from which a lesson may be culled, but does not actively illustrate or emblemize any virtue or value (he is not the subject of any verb).

⁵⁸ In fact, it was not Eli who directly neglected divine mandates but his two sons, whom 1 Sam 2:12 calls "worthless men." These abused the practice of the priesthood (2:13–17) and, though Eli was unhappy with this state of affairs (2:22–25) and appears not to have been complicit in it, it is he whom God holds responsible, as clarified in a prophetic word (2:27–36) and the dream of the young boy Samuel (3:11–14).

⁵⁹ The Ark's placement controls the narrative here: It resides in the temple at 1 Sam 3:3, when the young Samuel begins to live there, but then is lost when the elders of Israel carry it into battle against the Philistines after an inexplicable loss, apparently assuming that the ark will magically render some success.

In particular, this passage prompts one to recall 1 Thess 5:8, where Paul speaks of “the breastplate of faith and love” and “the hope of salvation” as a helmet,⁶² as well as Eph 6:14–17. The latter, the quintessential “spiritual warfare” passage of the New Testament, delineates the “armor of God” and speaks of a “belt of truth,” “breastplate of righteousness,” “shoes of gospel readiness,” “shield of faith,” “helmet of salvation,” and “sword of the spirit.”⁶³ Ps-Hegesippus resonates with both 1 Thess 5:8 and Eph 6:17 in mentioning a helmet, and Eph 6:16 in mentioning a shield, though neither biblical passage talks about throwable weapons (the NT writers may have missed their target here – pun intended).⁶⁴ This semantic weaponization of piety at *De Excidio* 5.16.1 not only constructs a Hezekiah *exemplum* that falls perfectly in line with the rest of the passage, but also contributes to the ongoing Christianization of the speech’s overall exemplary semiotics, if not its exemplary logic: Ps-Hegesippus implies that, like the early Christians represented by Paul in 2 Cor 10:4, so also the heroes of Hebrew antiquity fought not (only?) with “carnal weapons” but with the more potent equipment of humility, submission, and prayer.

By including not only Hezekiah but also Sennacherib and Rabshakeh as named characters, Ps-Hegesippus constructs a legendary environment of *exempla* good and bad, even while Hezekiah does most of the work as exemplary actor.⁶⁵ In concluding the scene, furthermore, the efficacy

⁶² 1 Thess 5:8: “But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation” (θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας/*loricam fidei et caritatis et galeam spem salutis*).

⁶³ Eph 6:10–17: “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the full armor of God (τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ/*arma dei*), so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God (τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ/*armaturam Dei*), so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth (περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὁσφὺν ὑμῶν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ/*succincti lumbos uestros in ueritate*) and having put on the breastplate of righteousness (τὸν θώρακα τῆς δικαιοσύνης/*loricam iustitiae*), and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace (ὑποδησάμενοι τοὺς πόδας ἐν ἐτοιμασίᾳ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς εἰρήνης/*calciati pedes in praeparatione euangelii pacis*); in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith (τὸν θυρεὸν τῆς πίστεως/*scutum fidei*) with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one, and take the helmet of salvation (τὴν περικεφαλαίαν τοῦ σωτηρίου/*galeam salutis*), and the sword of the spirit (τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος/*gladium spiritus*), which is the word of God.”

⁶⁴ For that matter, only Eph 6 ever mentions offensive weapons; 1 Thess 5:8 has only defensive implements.

⁶⁵ The name “Rabshakeh” may refer to a title, not a name.

of prayer *qua* policy receives direct justification: “Prayer ascended, the angel descended. 185,000 Assyrians were cut down during the night. We counted the corpses – we did not see the slayer.” The laconic, balanced construction, *ascendit oratio, descendit angelus*, underlines the immediacy of what Josephus is recommending: The “ascent” of prayer effects the instantaneous “descent” of divine aid, here to the tune of 185,000 enemy soldiers slain by night (*caesa per noctem*; cf. 2 Kgs 19:35; Isa 37:36). Prayer’s ascension causes God’s condescension. The two first-person plural verbs in the final clause, claiming autopsy of the miracle’s aftermath but not of its commission, presumably implicate Josephus and his hearers within the *populus genti Iudaeae* that Sennacherib and Rabshakeh had threatened. Not only is divine aid the demonstrably successful way to deal with foreign powers, but this is something poignantly experienced by the very ancestors of Josephus and his hearers, as the *exempla* that Josephus brings to the table prove.

The Sennacherib–Hezekiah episode is followed by the “story of the five kings” that Josephus claims to have “passed over.” The two episodes then mentioned – which demonstrate powerfully through the prophet Elisha that prayer, faith, and piety are superior tools in international warfare to conventional measures – were discussed in [Chapter 7](#). The twofold Elisha saga then folds into another of the maxims that Josephus sporadically elicits from his *exempla* list. This gnomic aside adds another level of complexity to the martial ethics Josephus has been constructing: It is not that waging conventional warfare is wrong per se; it is simply that it must be divinely sanctioned (i.e., *oraculo permissum*). Whether one seeks the right to wage war (*bellandi ius*) or whether one is hardly (*minime*) engaged in war at all, *uictoria* accrues to those who seek God in the process. The experiences of the *duces patrum* make this clear (*liquet*).

At this point in his survey, Josephus doubles back: he returns to several figures he has already mentioned in an apparent effort to qualify his argument thus far in terms of the general truth he has just stated. Conventional warfare *can be* licet, but only when approved and supported by the divine sphere. In fact, the *exempla* he here brings forward constitute a list of the most overt instances of divine participation in war alongside the people of God within Jewish tradition. He mentions again Moses (and Amalek), Joshua, and Gideon, now adding Samson and Samuel. Collocating heroes from the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges, Ps-Hegesippus has Josephus propound a principle that allows for actual fighting – but only in truly exceptional circumstances. The Amalek–Moses–Joshua *exemplum* refers to Exodus 17, where the Israelites defeat

Amalek because of Moses' quasi-magical gesture of lifting up (the staff of God in) his hands (17:8–12); “on the ground,” however, the victory is achieved “with the edge of the sword” (17:13).⁶⁶ The Gideon *exemplum* is a repeat reference to Judges 7 where, after having sorted out his troops *in aqua* (7:4–8),⁶⁷ the confusion of the enemy troops is followed up by brutal slaughter (7:16–25).⁶⁸ The Samson *exemplum* recalls the judge Samson's numerous and extremely violent exploits among the Philistines (Judg 14–15)⁶⁹ that he performed with and because of piously uncut hair – until, that is, he was duped into allowing his hair to be cut (16:17–20).⁷⁰ Finally, saying that Samuel conquered (*uicit*) after having set up a *lapis* refers to a scene in 1 Sam 7 that is in fact both preceded and proceeded by Israel's “striking” and defeating the Philistines.⁷¹ The fact that Samson and Samuel appear in such close proximity here is another hint that Ps-Hegesippus is drawing upon Hebrews 11 (both are listed in 11:32).⁷² With these scriptural *exempla*, wherein hand-to-hand combat appears sanctioned by some form of mechanized connection to divine will,⁷³ Josephus makes a somewhat surprising concession: The

⁶⁶ Exod 17:8–13.

⁶⁷ Here the Lord tells Gideon that “I will test” your men; he instructs Gideon to bring his men down to a body of water and watch how they drink (Judg 7:4–5). Those who lap with their tongue “like a dog laps” are separated from those who kneel down to drink; this reduces Gideon's force from 10,000 to 300 (his force already having been diminished from 32,000 to 10,000 just before: Judg 7:3).

⁶⁸ After the ruse of Gideon with trumpets, jars, and torches (Judg 7:16–20) throws the enemy into confusion, leading to self-slaughter (7:21–22), several other Israelite tribes are called to pursue and slaughter the Midianites (7:23–24) before, finally, the two leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, are both captured, executed, and decapitated (7:25).

⁶⁹ At Judg 14:19 Samson kills thirty Philistine more or less on a whim; at Judg 15:8 he also strikes certain Philistines in vengeance; at Judg 15:14–16, with the spirit of the Lord come upon him, Samson strikes down 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass.

⁷⁰ And, famously, Samson won one last victory over the Philistines at the time of his death, killing more then than during his previous lifetime altogether (Judg 16:27–30), his hair having grown back by that time (16:22).

⁷¹ 1 Sam 7:11–13: “The men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as below Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone (ἄβαν/λίθον *ēva/lapidem unum*) and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the LORD has helped us (ἐξοθήθησεν ἡμῖν/*auxiliatus est nobis*).’ So the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.”

⁷² Given the wording of that verse – “And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, *Samson*, Jephthah, of David and *Samuel* and the prophets...?” (emphasis mine) – Ps-Hegesippus may be seen to be fulfill its unrealized aim.

⁷³ The common denominator between these exemplary episodes is a specific ritualized action, object, or way of being that acts as a formal and manifestly effective guarantee of divine empowerment in a very particular situation: (1) Moses' raising his staff, (2)

conventional, violent practices of fighting and warring are not *necessarily* taboo; rather, Israelite antiquity shows that waging war requires official and somewhat formalized divine endorsement to be legitimate (and successful). The Jews to whom Josephus is speaking have no such license.

This series of miraculous “conquerors” leads Josephus into his discussion of David “conquering” by his union with Bathsheba. This episode we discussed in [Chapter 6](#). Here I note only that choosing David’s union with Bathsheba as the event with which to illustrate Josephus’ argument seems exceedingly odd: This was one of few instances in David’s life when he is explicitly said *not* to have gone out to war (2 Sam 11:1b)⁷⁴ and to have done something *not* sanctioned by God. Given that Ps-Hegesippus knows David’s legacy well, why did he not pick one of many points in David’s military career when he *did* wage war by prayer and faith? Similarly, the second statement made about David – that he even prevailed in civil war inasmuch as he tried to avoid it rather than instigating it – seems out of place in the sequence of Josephus’ argument, if not of the work as a whole. Where did the idea of civil war come from within Josephus’ exemplary survey? And why, again, is *this* a good example of how David was victorious? This is hard to answer, but Ps-Hegesippus is not alone in making this suggestion.⁷⁵ He must, therefore, be engaging Christian discussions of David’s legacy in late antiquity, and he shifts the focus of Josephus’ speech briefly in order to do so.

Josephus returns to a discussion of war in general with a reference to Asa (*Asaf*).⁷⁶ One of the most laudable of Judah’s ancient kings, Asa is here apparently remembered in the context of his facing a million-man Ethiopian army in 2 Chr 14 (not mentioned in the parallel account of 1 Kgs 15).⁷⁷ With

Gideon’s water-sorting and unconventional method of attack with trumpets, jars, and torches, (3) Samson’s keeping his hair unclipped per the terms of a Nazirite vow (Judg 13:5), or (4) Samuel’s erection of a stone to signal/memorialize (or encapsulate or conjure?) divine assistance.

⁷⁴ 2 Sam 11:1: “Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel ... *But David stayed at Jerusalem*” (emphasis mine).

⁷⁵ See discussion and references in [Bay 2021c](#).

⁷⁶ Cf. Ambrose *De obitu Theodosii* 15 with [Somenzi 2009](#), 67.

⁷⁷ The progression *uicit ... posteaquam ...* is a bit odd, because it implies that Asa conquered (in war) *before* the run-in with the Ethiopian (though note that *M*, an old ms of *De Excidio*, reads *postea* without *quam*). No battle is recorded before this in 2 Chr 14, but we do read that because of Asa’s enacting policies that reflected his religious scruples (14:2–5a), the kingdom of Judah “was undisturbed under him” and “he built fortified cities in Judah, since the land was undisturbed, and there was no one at war with him during those years, because the LORD had given him rest”

only 580,000 troops himself, Asa prays to God on his way into battle, confessing that God is the only possible help “between the powerful and those who have no strength” (2 Chr 14:11).⁷⁸ Such a subtext certainly makes this *exemplum* applicable to Josephus’ audience, a group of besieged Jews holding out against the Roman war machine. Asa’s exemplary warfare moves Josephus’ discourse back to the notion of *fides*, with respect to which Asa is said to have been *bonus* even though he did not persevere “to the end” (*ad finem*).⁷⁹ This qualifier refers to Asa’s latter career: After a long rule filled with famous religious reforms and faithfulness in war and diplomacy, Asa abandoned divine instruction.⁸⁰ Still, Asa is a robust *exemplum* of *fides*.

The theme of *fides* that Asa helps reintroduce reverberates through the next part of the discussion.⁸¹ After Asa, Josephus mentions in passing an unnamed woman whose *fides* earned her violent victory: “A woman also, who had preserved faith in God, conquered in arms” (*uicit et mulier armis quae fidem deo reseruauit*). The heroine thus identified seems to be the namesake of the Book of Judith,⁸² though the

(14:5b–6; cf. 14:7). This abeyance of Judah’s military conflicts seems to be reflected in Ps-Hegesippus’ “*uicit*.”

⁷⁸ 2 Chr 14:8–12: “Now Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah, bearing large shields and spears, and 280,000 from Benjamin, bearing shields and wielding bows; all of them were valiant warriors. . . . So Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up in battle formation in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, ‘LORD, there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; let not man prevail against You.’ So the LORD routed the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled.” Asa’s statement about God being able to help “those who have no strength” against the powerful seems to inform Ps-Hegesippus’ discussion of *paucos* vs. *uvalidiores* in his reiteration of Asa’s legacy.

⁷⁹ This theme of Asa’s “incapacità . . . di mantenere la fede in Dio *sino alla fine*,” Ps-Hegesippus shares with Ambrose (*De obitu Theodosii* 15); Somenzi 2009, 66–67.

⁸⁰ See 2 Chr 16:7–10, 12; cf. 1 Kgs 15:23b.

⁸¹ So far in *De Excidio* 5.16 Josephus has mentioned *fides* with respect to Rahab, Elisha (twice), and then Asa.

⁸² So Ussani (CSEL 66.1: 328). This association is strengthened by Judith’s lengthy and overt demonstration of faith and piety in Judith 8–9. She is said to have feared the Lord stoutly (ἐφοβεῖτο τὸν θεὸν σφόδρα/*timebat Dominum ualde*; 8:8) and, in fact, more or less articulates the very point that Josephus’ speech is here trying to make in Judith 8:11–27, referencing the need for prayer (8:17) and God’s ability to help (8:15); in these speeches, Judith employs *exempla* and mentions the fathers (8:19) – sometimes by name (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Laban in 8:26) – plays on the theme of slavery (8:23), and claims that the Judeans’ lives and sanctuary, temple, and altars depend on their acting wisely (8:24). In short, the Judith reference that Ps-Hegesippus glosses over very quickly is perhaps the most applicable, poignant *exemplum* present within the long list of *De Excidio* 5.16.1. It is fitting that Judith claims in 8:32 that she is “about to do something that will be passed down through all generations

anonymity of the reference evokes other armed, victorious women from Jewish tradition such as Deborah (Judg 4:4–10) and Jael (Judg 4:17–22).⁸³ As Rahab and Sarah have already shown, the ethics of Josephus' exemplary discourse is not restricted to one sex.⁸⁴ But it is gendered: In *De Excidio* we find both the passive and submissive wife as property, Sarah, being traded back and forth like a bag of goods in 5.15, the surprising woman warrior figure of Judith or Jael here, and the in-between figure of Rahab mentioned just above, an effective historical agent yet not the masculinized slayer of men (rather, as a *meretrix*, an object of presumably male sexuality). This spectrum of female *exempla* in *De Excidio* mirrors the habit of Roman exemplarity by including *exempla* from across the social spectrum.⁸⁵ A good comparandum for them might be the Roman heroine Cloelia, whom Ps-Hegesippus also mentions (5.46.1). At the same time, Ps-Hegesippus draws his women *exempla* from a diverse biblical sampling whose various gender roles span from the stereotyped to the striking to the downright surprising. Here *De Excidio* joins other early Christian texts, beginning with the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, and the Gospel of Matthew, in which female *exempla* from biblical antiquity (like Rahab) are given a literary place in the tradition.⁸⁶

Following the reference to Judith, Josephus averts to the flip side of his argument: Historical *exempla* not only illustrate that war waged *with God on one's side* is a surefire way to win. They also demonstrate the obverse: War waged *without God* ensures defeat. Here Ps-Hegesippus begins with Saul, said to have been conquered (*uictus est*) because he did not observe the precepts of God (*praecepta dei*), a reference to Saul's paradigmatic failure when he neglected to destroy completely the people

of our descendants"; her act indeed earned her a spot in the *exempla* list of *De Excidio* 5.16, even if her billing is anonymous. In Judith 9, Judith prays at length (9:1–14, the entire chapter) before eventually making her way into the camp of Holofernes (Nebuchadnezzar's general) by trickery and then beheading him with his own sword (13:7–9). Notably, *fides* terminology is absent from the Vulgate's Latin of the Book of Judith.

⁸³ Judith echoes Deborah and Jael in important ways: Crawford 1992. Cf. also the unnamed woman who effectively kills Abimelech in Judg 9:53–54; the unnamed "wise woman" in the city of Abel, who arranged for the killing (and decapitation) of Sheba son of Bichri on Joab's behalf (2 Sam 20:16–22); and even Esther of the Book of Esther.

⁸⁴ On female *exempla* in late antique Christian reception, see Siquans 2017.

⁸⁵ Langlands 2018, 122; Bell 2008, 2.

⁸⁶ For Rahab see Matt 1:5 (Rahab, Ruth); 1:6 (Bathsheba, i.e., "the wife of Uriah"); Heb 11:31 (Rahab); Jam 2:25 (Rahab); cf. 1 Clem 12.1,3; Prudentius *Tituli Historiarum* 16.61–64; Jerome *Ep.* 52.3.

and plunder following his defeat of the Amalekites in 1 Sam 15.⁸⁷ Next Josiah is lambasted: Though he was “holy in other regards” (*sanctus cetera*),⁸⁸ he was wounded in battle because he went forth against the enemy contrary to the command of the Lord (2 Kgs 23:28–30; 2 Chr 35:20–24).⁸⁹ But Josephus avers that Josiah’s death saved him from the *capituitas* “which was owed our sins” (*nostris debitam peccatis*). This first-person plural reference to corporate sin and its punishment by foreign capture or rule strongly reflects Josephus’ context of speaking; at the same time, the idea of corporate Jewish *peccata* resonates with the early Christian supersessionary discourse of the Jews’ rejection by God and the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

Josephus’ argument takes on an even more specific poignancy when he states that Neco (King of Egypt) had born testimony to his faithfulness (*eius fidei testimonium*) when he claimed not to have come out against Josiah.⁹⁰ Just as Josiah went out against an enemy who was not his enemy and who was not looking for a fight, so Josephus implies that his listeners are bearing arms against an enemy (Rome) who desires neither enmity nor battle. Josephus goes even further, claiming that the same thing had happened previously to King Amaziah (2 Kgs 14; 2 Chr 25).⁹¹ Amaziah, like Josiah and like the first-century Jewish rebels facing the Romans, broke a truce, picked a fight, and paid the price.

⁸⁷ After defeating the Amalekites and preserving some of the plunder against God’s specific orders, the Lord tells the prophet Samuel that Saul had not obeyed his words (לֹא־שָׁמַע לְדְבָרֵי לֹדְיוֹ/λογους/*uerba*; 1 Sam 15:11) and thus that he was rejecting him as king. The rest of 1 Sam 15 details the reasons for and form of Saul’s rejection, his “being conquered.”

⁸⁸ 1 Esd 1:23: “And the deeds of Josiah were upright in the sight of the Lord, for his heart was full of godliness.”

⁸⁹ Cf. 1 Esd 1:25–31; Jer 46:2, and especially Wis 4:11. Cf. *De Excidio* 5.53. This episode seems to have loomed large in Ps-Hegesippus’ assessing right and wrong pretexts for and methods of war. See *Somenzi* 2009, 67–69.

⁹⁰ 2 Chr 35:21; 1 Esd 1:26–27.

⁹¹ A reference to Amaziah, who reigned over Judah in Jerusalem for twenty-nine years, beginning in the second year of Joash King of Israel (2 Kgs 14:1–2; 2 Chr 25:1). Both kings instigated unsought battle, with Neco and Joash, respectively, each engagement resulting in the provoking Judean king being roundly defeated by the responding force. In 2 Chr 25:17 Amaziah sends to Joash seeking battle, and the latter tries to avoid this, claiming not to want to crush Amaziah and Judah (25:17–19), something he is nevertheless effectively forced to do (25:20–24). Many other parallels may be identified between Josiah, Amaziah, and Asa. Amaziah’s being a *consortium degeneris societatis* may alternatively correspond to his having amassed a patchwork army from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin along with 100,000 warriors from Israel whom he hired with silver, the latter of whom he was then ordered to disband (and to swallow the mercenary fee): 2 Chr 25:5–10. The Latin verbiage is quite vague.

Having introduced Amaziah, Josephus camps on this *exemplum* for a moment. Such special treatment (or “extended exemplarity” – see [Chapter 7](#)) may reflect the perceived appositeness of Amaziah’s legacy to the point at hand, or it could reflect Ps-Hegesippus’ particular interest and expertise in the historical materials of the Books of Samuel and Kings and Chronicles. Probably both. Either way, Josephus recounts in detail the scene from 2 Chr 25 where Amaziah is just like Asa, mentioned shortly before. “Warned by a man of God” (*ab homine dei monitus erat*), Amaziah broke alliance with his hired mercenaries, but then went on as *uictor* of the battle to offer *sacrificia* to the very same idols he had captured (*ipsis simulacris*). Asa had begun his career by heeding a prophet of God (2 Chr 15:8) before turning in his later years to disobedience.⁹² So also Amaziah. So also Zedekiah (*Sedecias*), whom Josephus brings forward next for the same didactic purpose: The prophet Jeremiah had told him to leave the city.⁹³ Did he? No. Josephus avers, “he cheated himself and his people by infidelity” (*infidelitate semet ipsum et suos decepit*). Zedekiah’s exemplary failure (2 Kgs 24:18–25:30),⁹⁴ while proffering the same lesson as Asa and Amaziah, hits a bit closer to home both for Josephus’ listeners and for Ps-Hegesippus’ overall narrative trajectory. Zedekiah’s failure to trust in God resulted in the famous capture and destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BCE (2 Kgs 25).⁹⁵ And like Zedekiah, who at that time resisted Nebuchadnezzar and paid the price, the Jews to whom Josephus is speaking are resisting Titus in the same way and should expect similar results. They are exhibiting the same *infidelitas* as their ancestors’ hapless king. Josephus the character expects his hearers to understand this, and Ps-Hegesippus the author expects his readers to understand it even better with the benefit of hindsight: The Jews’ innate *infidelitas* anticipated their downfall.

The most striking thing about this exemplary juxtaposition is how it frames Josephus the speaker: Just as Jeremiah warned Zedekiah against resisting Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon (see, e.g., Jer 34:6–7; 37:7–10; 38:20–23; cf. 2 Chr 36:15–16), so Josephus warns his countrymen

⁹² Ps-Hegesippus’ mention of a “man of God” (*homo dei*) here corresponds exactly to the Vulgate rendering of 2 Chr 25:6, where “a man of God (איש האלהים/ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ/*homo Dei*) came to [Amaziah]” and instructed him.

⁹³ The travesty dominates the Book of Jeremiah: see Jer 21, 24, 27–29, 32, 34, 36–39, 44:30, 52.

⁹⁴ This devastating downfall ends the Book of 2 Kings/4 Kingdoms. Cf. 2 Chr 36:11–21.

⁹⁵ Interestingly, Ps-Hegesippus avoids the “small mistake” made by Josephus ([Rajak 2002](#), 32) when he says that Zedekiah actually “witnessed the fall of Jerusalem,” though his eyes had already been put out according to biblical tradition. Rajak reads this as evidence that Josephus was working from memory, not biblical text.

against resisting Titus and Rome. Josephus is a prophet.⁹⁶ Josephus is Jeremiah.⁹⁷ The positive prophetic light in which this part of the speech frames Josephus finds its inspiration in Josephus' *Jewish War*. In his own script of this same speech, we read:

Thus, when the king of Babylon besieged this city, our king Zedekiah, who contrary to the prophetic warnings of Jeremiah had given him battle, was himself taken prisoner and saw the town and the temple levelled to the ground. Yet, how much more moderate was that monarch than your leaders, and his subjects than you! For, though Jeremiah loudly proclaimed that they were hateful to God for their transgressions against Him, and would be taken captive unless they surrendered the city, neither the king nor the people put him to death. But you—to pass over those scenes within, for it would be beyond me adequately to portray your enormities—you, I say, assail with abuse and missiles me who exhort you to save yourselves, exasperated at being reminded of your sins and intolerant of any mention of those crimes which you actually perpetrate every day.

Josephus *War* 5.391–93⁹⁸

It is interesting to note how different the two tenors of this *exemplum* appear in Josephus' and Ps-Hegesippus' scripts of this speech. In Josephus' *War*, one gets the impression that the *exemplum* contributes to an impassioned, life-or-death, last-ditch effort to recall the Jews from utter destruction (again!). The explicit comparison of Zedekiah (as being μετρίωτερος) to his contemporary Jewish ἡγεμόνες, the image of Jeremiah yelling his prophetic message (βοῶντα), the hyperbolic statement of Josephus' rhetorical incapacity to list the Jews' "enormities" – all these things accrue to the image of a lively, desperate exhortation. The exclamation mark Thackeray inserts mid-speech is well placed. In *De Excidio*, on the other hand, the Zedekiah *exemplum* sounds almost mundane, appearing in a long list of *exempla* much the same, preceded and proceeded by like figures, narratives, and lessons. The flat, descriptive relating of the Zedekiah foible in *De Excidio* is overwhelmingly dispassionate. This is not to downplay the emotion of Ps-Hegesippus' version of the speech as a whole – he stresses this when he has Josephus call his comrades "pig-headed," *temarii*, thrice at the beginning of *De Excidio* 5.16 – but rather to say that comparing his treatment of Zedekiah to Josephus exposes the discrete interests of these narratives, their *exempla*, and their speeches. Josephus qua historian wants to show that he was just like Jeremiah in screaming warnings at his countrymen as they walked into disaster. For Ps-Hegesippus, Zedekiah is just

⁹⁶ Kelley 2004.

⁹⁷ See Avioz 2018; Margalit 2012; Sharon 2018; Cohen 1982.

⁹⁸ LCL 210: 124–25.

one more link in a long chain of biblical *exempla* proving the same set of interrelated points. The overall force of this list is to illustrate the obvious right course of action, exemplified in antiquity – a course of action that the Jews of Ps-Hegesippus' narrative manifestly do not take.

The *Listenwissenschaft* at work in *De Excidio* is apparent when we notice that, after the Zedekiah/Jeremiah *exemplum*, whereas Josephus' *War* moves forward centuries to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, Ps-Hegesippus moves laterally (canonically speaking) within his Christian Old Testament to remember one of the other great famous prophets standing alongside Jeremiah in the canon: Isaiah. He has Josephus recall that, when the *populus Iudaeorum* (i.e., Israel/Samaria) was deported by the Assyrians to Babylon (c. 722 BCE),⁹⁹ the Lord commanded the people who remained (i.e., Judah) through Isaiah the prophet (*mandauit dominus per Eseiam prophetam*) not to look or migrate to Egypt, but rather to preserve themselves within the *imperium* of one race (*unius gentis*) "lest a dual captivity compound their trouble." However, as with Zedekiah's failure to hearken to Jeremiah, here too the people do not heed the prophet's command: "they who impatiently demanded to be free of the yoke of one race, after receiving the oracles of God, were made captives of two races" – that is, Assyria and Egypt. Here Ps-Hegesippus recalls a theme that courses through the Book of Isaiah (esp. Isa 30–31),¹⁰⁰ wherein the prophet warns the people of Judah, threatened and/or oppressed by Assyria, not to seek refuge in Egypt. Such refuge would be sought in vain. In shifting historical scenarios from Jeremiah and the Babylonians (deportation c. 586 BCE) to Isaiah and the Assyrians (later 700s BCE),¹⁰¹ Ps-Hegesippus actually steps more than a century *backward* in time. But this retroversion only serves to show how compatible are the exemplary rhetorics to be gleaned from these two paradigmatic prophetic careers.

⁹⁹ Babylon was indeed conquered by the Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser III in 729 BCE, before Assyria's conquering of Judah/Jerusalem. It was the Northern Tribes, i.e., Israel/Samaria, that were deported by Sargon II in 722 BCE, but the Southern Judahites to which Isaiah speaks in, e.g., Isa 30.

¹⁰⁰ Paradigmatic of this is Isa 30:1–2 and Isa 31:1a; cf. Isa 20:3–5; 30:1–17; 31:1–9; 36:6–9. Isaiah develops a special three-way relationship between Assyria, Egypt, and Israel (Isa 19:23–25).

¹⁰¹ Ps-Hegesippus remembers that "after the Jewish people had been carried away by the Assyrians to Babylon, the remaining people who were left behind thought to betake themselves to Egypt." The deportation mentioned in the first part of this sentence refers to Sargon II's deporting the Israelites/Samaritans in 722 BCE, which caused the latter to look to Egypt in either 713–711 or 705–701 BCE, a move condemned in, e.g., Isa 30.

In the context of *De Excidio* 5.16, Josephus is playing on the prophetic type-scene: God's prophet warns people, people ignore prophet, God punishes people. By means of two prophetic *exempla*, two of the most famous personalities of Jewish tradition, Jeremiah and Isaiah, Josephus reminds his countrymen of their nation's painful ancient legacy where failure to submit to empires ordained by God – that is, failure to obey the *oracula dei* – resulted in more devastating defeat and harsher servitude. Interestingly enough, the Book of Isaiah explicitly presents itself as providing precisely this kind of reminder in the context of Judah's reliance upon Egypt: Isa 30:8 identifies this failure of the people as a cipher for reading wartime disobedience, the exact kind of disobedience under discussion in *De Excidio* 5.16.¹⁰²

The parallel destructions/deportations of Israel (Samaria) and Judah carried out by Assyria/Sargon II (722/1 BCE)¹⁰³ and Babylon/Nebuchadnezzar (587/6 BCE), respectively, are without question some of the most poignant episodes one could cull from Jewish national history. They certainly make a powerful point in the speech of *De Excidio* 5.15–16. The mention of both contexts – Ps-Hegesippus adds the Isaiah *exemplum* to the prophet Jeremiah, who had already appeared in *War* – furthermore bolsters our ability to appreciate how Ps-Hegesippus both relies upon Josephus' *War* for certain themes (and a few *exempla*) and yet expands those themes considerably by piling up complementary examples. In the version of this speech recorded in the *Jewish War*, Josephus moves from discussing the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem (5.391) to the Jewish encounter with Antiochus Epiphanes (5.394) to the Jewish encounter with the Romans (5.395), all after mentioning the Assyrians' (Sennacherib's) failed attempt to besiege Jerusalem (5.388) and the restoration from Babylon under Cyrus (5.389).

In Ps-Hegesippus' version, the speech moves from the Babylonian deportation through the Assyrian deportation to the Egyptian-sponsored rebellion under Assyria and then on to a much more extensive account of

¹⁰² Isa 30:8: "Now go, write it on a tablet before them and inscribe it on a scroll, that it may serve in the time to come as a witness forever." This verse follows Isaiah's call for the people *not* to go down to Egypt to escape Assyria, claiming that such hope in men would be "vain and empty" (30:7a). Here Isaiah – and this is also true of the prophetic tradition more generally – shows its hand as a tradition overtly interested in using past precedent to judge/gauge future and/or present action by way of reminder. This kind of penchant toward ethical collective memory serves as one means by which the Jewish tradition makes use of *exempla* and exemplarity.

¹⁰³ Sargon II finished a siege begun three years earlier by Shalmaneser V.

the restoration under Cyrus *and Darius*, and then to a discussion of the Jewish interface with Rome *et alia* toward and during the first century CE. There are in this rendition many more exemplary parallels to the stories recalled in *War* and, just as importantly, there are far more exemplary figures mentioned by name. More kings are named, more prophets mentioned. Part of this may be due to the Christian canonical imagination, wherein figures like Jeremiah and Isaiah, Cyrus and Darius often go together and prompt mention of one another when they come up. But this preponderance of *exempla* also places more emphasis upon the ethical mandate of the speech: To wage war outside of divine recommendation – which the Jews are doing by resisting the Romans, God’s appointed imperial power – always leads to destruction.

The final biblical *exempla* to appear in the speech at *De Excidio* 5.16 follow the run-out of the thematic Jews versus empire part of the speech just discussed. Josephus has moved on from Zedekiah/Jeremiah and Isaiah through Cyrus and Darius to extol the many benefits of living under a foreign empire, citing the restoration of the Temple cult under the Persians and the Romans’ sparing of himself as examples of the moderation and tolerability of alien rulers. But Josephus anticipates the inefficacy of his words. He assumes that his countrymen will remain unmoved, that the Jews will continue to resist Rome. On the basis of this assumption Josephus cites “divine prodigies” (*prodigia superiora*) as evidence of God’s abandonment of the Jews. In broad strokes, Ps-Hegesippus is here recasting material found in the version of Josephus’ speech in *Jewish War* 5.400–19. There Josephus concludes that it has never been given to the Jews to win wars conventionally – that is, with weapons (οὐδέποτε τῷ ἔθνει τὰ ὄπλα δέδοται; 5.399) – and that in fact war has been a sign of defeat for them. He goes on ([in] famously) to blame the Jews for offending the deity, bringing destruction upon themselves (5.400–3), and cites examples of successful resistance and diplomacy in the Jewish past (though without naming names). Ps-Hegesippus adapts details from Josephus’ earlier Greek oration, namely (1) discussion of Jerusalem’s waters, which used to act as a (divine) defense of Jerusalem and its people but now appear to have switched sides,¹⁰⁴ and (2) Josephus’ damning statement about the divinity’s posture toward a ritually unclean people and place.¹⁰⁵ But, characteristically, Ps-Hegesippus goes much further.

¹⁰⁴ Josephus *War* 5.410–13.

¹⁰⁵ Josephus *War* 5.413–15.

This portion of Josephus' speech at *De Excidio* 5.16 typifies Ps-Hegesippus' language and style: the paraphrastic condensation of material found in Josephus' *War* (i.e., the "sign" of Jerusalem's waters), the statement that it is "no wonder" (*nec mirum*) that *diuina gratia* has departed from the Jews (*recessit a Iudaeis*),¹⁰⁶ the language and idea of contagion or epidemic (*contagium* vs. God's being *immaculatus*, the notion of a *macula*, the verb *contaminare*).¹⁰⁷ The two duos of biblical *exempla* who appear at the end of this quotation also embody *De Excidio*'s literary proclivities: Dathan/Abiram and Moses/Aaron are some of Ps-Hegesippus' favorite exemplary pairs (see *De Excidio* 1.44.8; 3.16–17; 5.2.1). Their rhetorical function within this part of Josephus' speech is to qualify and define the divine character. Josephus posits that a holy God cannot and will not reside in a Jerusalem that is witness to widespread Jewish outrage, murder, and bloodshed (*flagitia, funesta scelera, parricida*). The ritual impurity of such activity marks the Jews' effective downfall in both *War* and *De Excidio*. But in *De Excidio* four exemplary figures emerge from the scriptural past to reconfirm the divine reticence to brook contact with wickedness.

Dathan and Abiram, Moses and Aaron arrive when Josephus recalls the fateful episode of Numbers 16. There Dathan and Abiram, along with the sons of Korah and others, challenge the legitimacy of Moses' and Aaron's seemingly self-wrought authority (16:1–3).¹⁰⁸ A scenario ensues in which a contest is designed involving censers and burning incense; this will determine whom God has and has not selected from among the people for lead roles.¹⁰⁹ The Lord sides with Moses and Aaron, telling them: "Separate yourselves (הבדילו/ἀποσχήσθητε/*separamini*) from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly" (16:21). The chapter – and indeed, the Book of Numbers and the Torah as a whole – had already previously established a motif of "separation" – that is, "holiness" – that fits with God's method of distinguishing between members of a single

¹⁰⁶ Cf. particularly two statements from *De Excidio* 5.2.1: "No wonder (*Nec mirum*) if they [the Jews] have lost the works of the prophets, since they have rejected the witness of the prophets [i.e. Jesus]" and "No wonder (*Nec mirum*) if a people who moved away from God and followed the wicked spirit of contradiction is divided against its very self;" also 1.34.1; 1.40.12; 3.6.3; 4.17.1; 5.7.1.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *contagium/contagio* at *De Excidio* 5.2.1 (x2) and 1.37.6; 1.39.1; 1.40.9; 2.2.4; 2.16.2; 3.16.1; 4.5.1; 5.41.2 (x3); 5.53.1.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Josephus *Ant.* 4.35ff; 1 Clem 5.12.

¹⁰⁹ Moses' and Aaron's challengers already had leadership roles, but wanted more: Num 16:10–11.

congregation.¹¹⁰ When Moses and Aaron intercede on behalf of the people, God commands them to tell the congregation to separate itself from Dathan and Abiram, who have become the focal point of divine wrath and judgment (Num 16:23–27). Their punishment – a novel damnation in which the earth swallows them up (16:32; cf. 26:10) – is a public spectacle. A glance at the biblical account shows that Ps-Hegesippus has both captured the essence of the tale and also interpreted it. The divine mandate of Num 16:26 is that the people (1) depart from and (2) touch nothing that belongs to Dathan and Abiram, lest the innocent be “swept away in the sin” of the guilty. In *De Excidio* 5.16.1, Ps-Hegesippus has Josephus explain the rationale of this separation: namely, to prevent the blameless (*innoxii*) from the consequences of proximity to the blameworthy (*de consortio noxiorum*), which could comprise a stain (*macula*) contaminating (*contaminare*) the blameless, here called the “pious” (*pui*), or the punishment (*poena*) of the guilty enveloping them (*inuolueret*). The Bible’s language of being “swept away” comports more closely with the latter threat, and Ps-Hegesippus’ inference of “contamination” seems to relate to the mandate not to touch the guilty party’s belongings – the uncleanness of the *noxii* was communicable, dangerous.

Ps-Hegesippus’ take on the Dathan and Abiram episode underlines the divine character. It was God who had commanded that the congregation of Israel be separated from Dathan and Abiram and their families, and their belongings. Fellowship (*consortium*) with them was both toxic and dangerous. In the same way, God rejects fellowship with an unfit habitation, which Jerusalem had become. Jerusalem and the Jews are like Dathan and Abiram, bound for destruction and possessing communicable social-moral disease. The God who set Dathan and Abiram apart from the innocent before destroying them could have nothing to do with a city and people like that.

For Josephus, a Pharisee of priestly lineage, to have played on the theme of God’s holiness, as he does in the speech of *De Excidio* 5.16, would not have been far-fetched. Remember that Ps-Hegesippus operates with a strong measure of historiographical realism.¹¹¹ But one can also

¹¹⁰ To the sons of Korah, who are Levites, Moses asks near the beginning of the disagreement: “is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated (הִבְדִּיל/διέστειλεν/*separauit*) you from the rest of the congregation of Israel?” (Num 16:9a). This theme of separation had already become definitive for the Book of Numbers, however, inasmuch as *who the Levites are* as religious functionaries has directly to do with their being separate(d).

¹¹¹ And likely would have formed his idea of “what a Jew in this situation might say,” in large part on the basis of the portrayal of Jews in the New Testament writings and on Josephus’ works themselves.

see in this final use of *exempla* in 5.16 a Christian theological undertone. The Dathan/Abiram versus Moses/Aaron episode conjures not only notions of final (and exceptional) judgment and damnation, but also of religious legitimacy and contest. Dathan and Abiram opposed Moses and Aaron because of the latter's claiming the priestly ministry (*munus sacerdotii*). If we read this foursome not only as instructive *exempla*, but as analogous to Josephus' first-century Jewish audience, something Josephus himself more or less suggests in his language, what do we find? Dathan and Abiram are the Jews, the *noxii* whose punishment (*poena*) is soon to come to fruition in Jerusalem's destruction, just as Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up by the earth.¹¹² So who may make legitimate claim to the priesthood? Who in this analogy corresponds to Moses and Aaron and, for that matter, the *innocentii*, the remaining congregation of the people of God? Could Ps-Hegesippus, the Christian author behind Josephus' speech, have the *Christians* in mind here?

Though this is not stated in Josephus' speech – indeed, a speech realistically scripted for Josephus could hardly broach such a subject – I suggest that a reasonable conclusion to be drawn from the Dathan/Abiram Moses/Aaron exemplary cohort in *De Excidio* 5.16.1 is that *Christians* constitute the legitimate people of God and may thus lay legitimate claim to Moses and Aaron and the legacy of God's priesthood. Indeed, in the long part of the speech preceding their mention, not treated in this chapter due to the absence of *exempla* therein, God's abandonment of the Jews is unpacked and expounded; the speech is *about* the God's rejection of the Jews, whence it is a short leap to infer God's concomitant acceptance of the Christians in their place. The Christian Scriptures claimed not only that the priesthood had changed (Heb 7:12), but that followers of Jesus now constituted God's legitimate priesthood (ἱεράτευμα/*sacerdotium*; 1 Pet 2:5, 9). Thus, even if only by implication, the final set of biblical *exempla* to appear in *De Excidio* 5.16 could be read to reinforce a Christian perspective on Jewish history and Hebrew heroes.¹¹³

This final argument is inferential, but it fits with the overall perspective of *De Excidio* and also with the theme of this chapter. The world of biblical *exempla* in *De Excidio* 5.15–16, like the world of biblical *exempla* within *De Excidio* writ large, is a world viewed from a Christian

¹¹² Dathan and Abiram laid illegitimate claim to the priesthood, and the *Jewish* priesthood is something whose legitimacy Ps-Hegesippus routinely problematizes and challenges; see esp. *De Excidio* 2.12.3–13.9.

¹¹³ Cf. the reference to Gen 49:10 in *De Excidio* Prol 3, and mention of Aaron's staff in 5.2.1 and 5.9.4.

vantage point. In [Chapter 8](#) we already noted hints of this. We saw how the themes, language, and method of exemplarity in *De Excidio* 3.16–17 drew heavily upon *Romanitas* while also exhibiting hints of *Christianitas* in the use of New Testament language. We have now seen that *De Excidio* 5.15–16, while playing upon and transvaluing Roman notions of *libertas* and *seruitus*, *uirtus* and *uictoria*, creates a Christian world of biblical *exempla*. Not only do we find New Testament language within Josephus’ speech, but also the meanings of that list carry Christian supersessionist overtones. Even more than in the earlier speech of Josephus’ *Jewish War*, here we find Ps-Hegesippus’ Josephus propping up the Romans as God’s sanctioned power, condemning the Jews as disobedient and ritually unclean, and presenting them up defunct as regards *Heilsgeschichte*, abandoned for the unannounced but implicitly present new people of God.

MAPPING THE CHRISTIAN WORLD OF HEBREW EXEMPLA AT *DE EXCIDIO* 5.15–16

There are many notable aspects of exemplarity on display in the speeches of *De Excidio* 5.15–16. These speeches, for example, highlight the endemic ambivalence of exemplary figures, often allowing for blurred lines between “good guys” and “bad guys” (e.g., Amaziah, Zedekiah). These speeches emphasize the effects of exemplary action in history, a key component of Roman exemplarity as well.¹¹⁴ They also epitomize Ps-Hegesippus’ proclivity for using pairs, sets, and lists of *exempla*: We noted strings of Abraham–Isaac–Jacob, Joseph–Judah–Benjamin, Saul–David–Solomon earlier on, and then more recently discussed the pairing of prophets (Jeremiah, Isaiah) with kings (Zedekiah, Hezekiah) and the Dathan–Abiram and Moses–Aaron pairs as ways to recall biblical episodes involving multiple examples. More could and should be said about the power of pairing and strength of sets in ancient Christian rhetoric, especially when it uses the Bible, but here suffice it to say that addition, multiplication, and combination provide Ps-Hegesippus with ways to construct more rhetorically powerful *exempla* lists at certain places. More salient to this chapter’s argument are the overtly Christian aspects of these speeches, like the notion of spiritual warfare.

By referring to prayer and faith as “weapons” (*arma*) in *De Excidio* 5.15–16, Ps-Hegesippus conjures the early Christian worldview, which

¹¹⁴ Langlands 2018, 89–90.

saw spirituality as a form of esoteric battle. This aspect of Christianity carried an outsized importance in the fourth century given the then relatively recent rise of various monastic-ascetic forms of Christian practice.¹¹⁵ While Ps-Hegesippus provides only a dim reflection of this milieu, he provides a reflection nonetheless. His use of such language signals a cultural idiom derived from the Christian Scriptures and increasingly prominent the further one moves into late antiquity. That he places such an idiom into the mouth of the historical Josephus should not be read to suggest that he thought Josephus actually said exactly these things. Rather, it identifies a particular way in which Ps-Hegesippus (and other authors like him) habitually thought and communicated in terms of distinctive metaphors and concepts. By merging such language and ideas with the Jewish and Roman contexts of his narrative setting and the biblical subtexts of his Old Testament Scriptures – for example, in attributing weapons of spiritual warfare to the ancient Judean King Hezekiah – Ps-Hegesippus signals that his narrative and rhetorical world, which deals with Jews, Romans, and ancient Hebrews, is actually Christian.

The literary effect of this language in *De Excidio* 5.15–16 is to produce a narrative tone that would be particularly familiar, intelligible, and attractive to a late antique Christian readership. Yet this is done in such a way as not to require knowledge of Christian tradition (some knowledge of biblical tradition is requisite for a full appreciation of the speech). An educated pagan from late antiquity with no knowledge of the Christian Bible could easily have understood the speech in *De Excidio* 5.15–16. Therefore, Ps-Hegesippus' unstated Christianization of that speech lies somewhere between literary flourish and ideological infusion, rendering an identifiably Christian outlook within a Jewish speech that almost any educated reader could apprehend.

In addition to surreptitiously employing language of the New Testament in *De Excidio* 5.15–16, Ps-Hegesippus also subtly engages with Christian interpretive traditions. This is especially prominent in how he treats King David vis-à-vis the Bathsheba episode. The biblical world of *exempla* we find in these speeches is once again filtered through late antique Christian hermeneutics, which render David's most embarrassing faux pas an unqualified "victory," realized in terms of conjugal *mysteria*. Not just the Christian Scriptures, but the history of Christian biblical interpretation informs these speeches.

¹¹⁵ See Kalleres 2015, 11; Brakke 2006, 13 *et alibi*; K. A. Smith 2011, 71–111; 2010; Brown 1970.

The Christian essence underlying the *exempla* brought forth in *De Excidio* 5.15–16 fits with the passage’s proclivity for mentioning and interpreting a whole host of scriptural passages and personalities, far beyond what is found in Josephus’ *Jewish War*. The world of Christian late antiquity was a world viewed through the lens of Scripture. Thus, even while using what were also Jewish Scriptures, Ps-Hegesippus places his own stamp upon the history he has Josephus narrate by inserting and adding details, interpreting accounts, and blending this into an oratory about theology, history, ethics, identity. He also stakes claim to the authority to interpret this tradition. In this Ps-Hegesippus seems to be following the early hero Stephen, the first “Christian” martyr, who in Acts 7 lets loose a fiery oration concerning Israel’s history as he blasts the Jews for killing and rejecting Jesus. This earns him a stoning (7:54–60). At one point Stephen shrieks:

You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, and you have now become betrayers and murderers of Him; you who received the Law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.

Acts 7:51–53 (NASB)

Stephen’s statement about the Jews’ guilt, faithlessness, and hard-heartedness reads like a thesis statement for *De Excidio*, particularly 5.15–16, given that this statement is preceded by a historical survey of the Jews’ more faithful ancestors.¹¹⁶ It is perhaps not so shocking, therefore, that within Josephus’ long speech in *De Excidio* he paraphrases a portion of this passage when he exclaims: “Why did you dismiss the testimonies of your fathers, o stiff-necked people just like your fathers?” (*Cur patrum reuellit testamenta, hereditas et in patres contumax?*). Like Stephen’s speech in Acts 7, Josephus’ speech in *De Excidio* 5.15–16 creates a Christian world out of Hebrew *exempla*, and both orations emphasize Jewish decline, perfidy, and guilt.

By bibliifying his discourse far beyond his source, in *De Excidio* 5.15–16 Ps-Hegesippus reveals himself a party to a discursive and literary enterprise involving the construction of a conceptual universe and literary culture based upon the Bible. Frances Young has discussed this late antique phenomenon and how the Bible became a kind of Christian

¹¹⁶ At the same time, recall that Ps-Hegesippus has a category for a Jewish continuum upon which *Iudaei* have always existed, perhaps even among the ancient *Hebraei*, and killed the righteous and the prophets (*De Excidio* 5.32.1).

Classics.¹¹⁷ It provided an intertextual map and basis for a new kind of discourse, totalizing in extent and historical in orientation. A passage like *De Excidio* 5.15–16 with its comprehensive, detailed inscription of Scripture onto Hebrew history emblemizes this exercise. With his biblical *exempla*, Ps-Hegesippus makes a unique historiographical contribution to late antique Christian culture-making by framing Jewish history with Old Testament heroes and hints of *interpretatio Christiana*.

* * *

As the apogee of this study, this chapter restates this book's thesis while ushering us toward its conclusion. *De Excidio* 5.15–16 contains the highest number and density of *exempla* in the work. There Ps-Hegesippus shows himself to be a Roman-Christian historian using Hebrew heroes to understand Jewish history. But he does not always wear his Christianness on his sleeve. Many of the tropes, tendencies, and terms that crop up are distinctively Roman, rather than Christian, though Ps-Hegesippus sometimes turns Roman notions into Christianized versions of themselves. Ps-Hegesippus is a Roman and Christian author whose self-expression stands out for its originality, even singularity, within late antiquity. *De Excidio* is a history of first-century Jews that borrows from biblical and classical culture to realize its narrative and rhetorical goals. The speeches treated in this chapter embody this reality. They remind us of the value, and necessity, of viewing *De Excidio* through the lens of classical historiography and Roman exemplarity, as well as the filters of biblical reception history and late ancient (imperial) Christianity. Projected onto the late ancient Christian imaginary, they remind us that the heroes of the Hebrew Bible loomed large in that collective literary consciousness, but also that playing with these biblical heroes qua *exempla* could constitute a rhetorical exercise quite Roman indeed. The late antique Christian historiographical imagination was built upon the Bible. But it was also built upon the Classics. And Ps-Hegesippus shows us what a marriage of those two traditionary worlds could look like.

¹¹⁷ Young 1997.

Conclusion

At the broadest level, this study shows that Ps-Hegesippus thought about first-century Jewish history by means of other, biblical “histories,” centuries older and worlds apart. As a Christian author seeking to understand and explain how Jerusalem, the Jewish Temple, and the Jews themselves were effectively destroyed by Rome in 70 CE, Ps-Hegesippus resorts to the Hebrew Bible. So too did many late ancient Christians. But Ps-Hegesippus stands out in this crowd as an author who also borrowed significantly from classical culture. The literary forms and rhetorical commonplaces of earlier Greco-Roman literature, the tenor and themes and terms endemic to Roman exemplarity, even certain passages from authors like Vergil and Cicero all form part of the traditionary foundation upon which *De Excidio* is built. Each chapter of this book has, in its own way, illustrated the simultaneously biblical and classical nature of *De Excidio*.

What it means to say that Ps-Hegesippus used Hebrew heroes to read Jewish history is not obvious. The chapters of this book have shown that, in fact, it meant several different things. In [Chapter 2](#) we saw how Hebrew heroes in *De Excidio* illustrate a conceptual separation between *Hebraei* and *Iudaei*, Hebrews and Jews. Outside of Ps-Hegesippus’ portrayal of biblical *exempla*, it is difficult to see how one could understand, or whether one would even see, the Hebrew/Jew divide within *De Excidio*. Ps-Hegesippus understood this divide in terms that were partly chronological, partly ethical. The shades of continuity versus discontinuity between Hebrew and Jew make *De Excidio*’s identity discourse in this regard complicated, verging at times upon contradictory. But Ps-Hegesippus did not only imagine ethnic identity on this broader, more abstract level. In [Chapter 3](#) we saw that he also had specific ideas about

how first-century Romans and first-century Jews would have understood the Jewish national character given founding figures like Abraham, Jephthah, and Josiah. Not unrealistically, Ps-Hegesippus imagines that a Roman like Titus would have understood the Jews as fundamentally backward and savage, given the horrific traditions of the Akedah (Gen 22) and Jephthah's apparent sacrifice of his daughter (Judg 11). Conversely, Ps-Hegesippus presents the Jewish rebel Eleazar as citing some of the very same biblical material – notably Abraham and the Akedah – to reach a very different conclusion about the Jews: Their traditional contempt for death marks a continuity of nobility between ancient Hebrews and modern-day Jews. In both cases, Ps-Hegesippus betrays his assumption as a historian that this is how his first-century characters would have negotiated what Jews “were like.”

A broader way of thinking about Jews via biblical *exempla*, one that also finds classical parallels going back to Herodotus at least, was examined in [Chapter 4](#). That is, Ps-Hegesippus picks up the conventional paradigm of national decline to describe the first-century Jews of his narrative. *De Excidio* 5.2.1 makes this point *via comparativa*: representative Hebrew heroes mark the high point of proto-Jewish history and thereby illustrate Jewish decline. Yet Ps-Hegesippus' articulation of this commonplace way of thinking does not share most of the theological and apologetic features of so much other ancient Christian literature. Reading Ps-Hegesippus' presentation of this perspective is like reading a conventional Roman historian, who also happens to be Christian, penning the history of the Jews over the *longue durée*. As such, Ps-Hegesippus saw Jewish history as a continuation of Hebrew antiquity. But, as a by-product and derivative thereof, first-century Jews were an aberration. A theme of *De Excidio* associated more fully with Christianity is martyrology, dealt with in [Chapter 5](#). There, we witnessed an implicit argument that appears when *De Excidio* is viewed in broad relief: The Christians of the first-century were martyrs – the Jews who died at that time were not. (Ironically, the Christian paradigms that Ps-Hegesippus uses, the apostles Peter and Paul, were Jews.) Nevertheless, what [Chapter 5](#) showed was that the martyr's death was something that Ps-Hegesippus thought about with biblical *exempla*. Saul, Jonathan, the Maccabean mother-martyr, and others appear in the discourse of Matthias in *De Excidio* 5.22 as he imagines the post-mortem fate of himself and his sons as those who will have been killed not as martyrs, but as traitors. For Ps-Hegesippus, martyrological (il)legitimacy plants itself within biblical tradition. Measured in such terms, the Jews killed during the Jewish revolt against Rome did not qualify as martyrs.

The chapters just discussed, comprising the first half of the book, illustrate that at a number of levels and in diverse ways Ps-Hegesippus used biblical *exempla* to imagine and articulate his historiography on the Jews. The next two chapters, which inaugurated the second half of the book, adopted a new angle on *De Excidio*'s use of biblical *exempla*, one that was at the same time both more broad and more specific. To wit, [Chapters 6](#) and [7](#) zeroed in on two specific biblical *figures* that loom large within *De Excidio* – King David and the prophet Elisha, respectively – but tracked the treatment of these figures throughout the entirety of the work.

[Chapter 6](#) shows that Ps-Hegesippus used certain individual *exempla* freely and widely. King David helps Ps-Hegesippus literarily, rhetorically, and theologically. He is a major part of Ps-Hegesippus' interpretation of Jerusalem's destruction, but he is also a means of comparing biblical to classical tradition (*De Excidio* 5.19.1), of understanding Jerusalem and its Temple in their spatial and architectural meaning (1.1.8; 5.9.1,4), of philosophizing about kingship (5.15.1) and about the meaning of real victory (5.16.1). He is a key to understanding how Ps-Hegesippus understood predictive prophecy. Biblical *exempla* were for Ps-Hegesippus not just curiosities of biblical reception, but integral tools he used to think with. They were the precepts that made his historiographical concepts come to life. As with David, so with Elisha. In [Chapter 7](#) we noted how, unlike almost any other *exemplum* in *De Excidio*, Elisha served to introduce long, extended episodes for making particular points, be they topological (4.17.1) or theological-political (5.2.1; 5.16.1). Elisha constituted an important means by which Ps-Hegesippus understood international diplomacy and divine causality. Like David, Elisha was for Ps-Hegesippus a biblical tool for thinking; but whereas David offered the capacity to inform a variety of issues, Elisha's utility was in catalyzing extended illustration. Inasmuch as Ps-Hegesippus thinks with his biblical *exempla*, David embodies his breadth of thought, Elisha his depth.

[Chapters 8](#) and [9](#) are in some ways the inverse of [Chapters 6](#) and [7](#). The latter deal with one biblical figure each, but across a series of passages; the former deal with one set of passages each, but both involve a large number of biblical figures. Also, inasmuch as *De Excidio* 3.16–17 ([Chapter 8](#)) and 5.15–16 ([Chapter 9](#)) contain the lion's share of biblical *exempla* within *De Excidio* writ large, these final chapters constitute an apt endpoint of the book, bringing earlier observations into several culminating arguments that encompass the heartbeat of this study.

[Chapter 8](#) stresses the Romanness of themes and terms discussed in the speeches made by Josephus and his Jewish countrymen at *De Excidio*

3.16–17. As much as anything else, these witness to a kind of classicism at work within *De Excidio*’s use of *exempla*, where literary form (historiographical speeches) and vocabulary and ideas resonate more strongly with the classical tradition than with Judeo-Christian literature per se. But we also saw in [Chapter 8](#) that distinctively Christian features, namely the language of New Testament writings, also creep into the *exempla*-filled discussions that Ps-Hegesippus scripted. This theme became the focus of the [Chapter 9](#), where an examination of *De Excidio* 5.15–16 revealed that, while classical elements were still conspicuously present, there the language of Christian tradition colors the list of *exempla* mentioned by the narrative character/speaker Josephus. By this move Ps-Hegesippus more or less overtly brings his Hebrew *exempla* into the Christian ideological fold, yet not in such a way as to render the passages difficult to comprehend for the non-Christian reader. Ps-Hegesippus’ clever insertion of the Christian biblical argot into 5.16.1 reads like “dog-whistling,” conveying in-group knowledge to Christian readers without overwhelming the reader with proprietary content.

The upshot of these chapters is that biblical *exempla* were integral to how Ps-Hegesippus conceptualized and articulated first-century Jewish history. Hebrew heroes were at the core of the enterprise. This is my primary argument. We have seen in a number of key passages – like *De Excidio* 5.2, 5.15–16, 5.22, 5.41.2, and 5.53.1 – that Ps-Hegesippus uses Old Testament paradigms to think through and frame Jewish history, both from the perspective of the author-narrator and from that of the narrative’s characters. In Ps-Hegesippus’ mind, the Roman–Jewish War and Jerusalem’s destruction were rendered intelligible through the filter of biblical examples.

To reiterate a suggestion made in the [Introduction](#) and [Chapter 1](#), the chapters just recapped, while highly focused, provide a viable mechanism for apprehending *De Excidio* as a work on the whole. First, our specific object of study (biblical *exempla*) has prompted a close look at what are arguably the most important passages in the work. The portions of *De Excidio* where the narrative departure from Josephus is most fully realized and where original content is most prominently displayed are those that are full of biblical references. These are the passages we have studied. At the same time, a study of biblical *exempla* in *De Excidio* has confronted us with the most important thematic foci of the narrative: right and wrong *religio*, the importance of *fides* and *oratio* (as prayer), the manifestation of *uirtus*, the relations of victor and vanquished, the meanings of liberty and servitude, life and death (and afterlife). Most importantly

of all, this study has offered an impression of how Ps-Hegesippus tends to interpret Jewish history, particularly the Roman–Jewish War and Jerusalem’s destruction: namely, as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy to be understood with reference to the historical *exempla* of the Christian Old Testament.

Ps-Hegesippus states in Prol 3 that *De Excidio* is going to be a work about the legacy of the leaders of the Hebrew race and whether or not this line continued unabated or broke off, only to be continued in the person of Jesus Christ. When we approach *De Excidio* with this in mind, on its own terms, we appreciate that the focus of the present study was actually not some elective if interesting curiosity of *De Excidio* – this study is an analysis of the heart of *De Excidio*. The heroes of the Hebrew Bible stand at the center of Ps-Hegesippus’ historiographical imagination as it is applied to the Jews. This fits with Judith Lieu’s identification of “the formative effect of Scripture in shaping [early Christian] perceptions of the Jews” within their own identity discourses and polemics.¹ To understand how biblical *exempla* function in *De Excidio* is to understand what the work is about as a narrative and what it is like as a piece of literature.

If the present book does a workable job of introducing *De Excidio* to the reader, what does that matter for our understanding of late antiquity more broadly? For one thing, this study illustrates how central biblical figures and stories could be within early Christian history-writing, but that they could have such importance without being overtly filtered through Christian typology, Christology, allegory, and doctrine. It is not immediately obvious that the heroes of the Christian Old Testament should have a place in the narration of later history. But in *De Excidio*, they have a very prominent place. The Bible, of course, was a mainstay of Christian late antiquity. The latter cannot be understood absent the Bible, as Robert Louis Wilken stated explicitly and as Frances Young has demonstrated at length.² Nevertheless, the place of historiography in ancient Christian biblical interpretation and reception is not generally appreciated. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation* gives little place to Christian historiography, and this is not atypical.³ The present study suggests that historiography should be part of larger discussions about the reception and interpretation of the Bible in Christian late antiquity.

¹ Lieu 2002, 5–6.

² Wilken 2008, 9, criticizes the standard survey of Bowersock, Brown, and Graber 1999, in which “there is no entry for Bible nor for Scriptures” (9). Also again Young 1997.

³ Blowers and Martens 2019.

A second broader contribution of this study regards the nature of ancient Christian historiography itself. *De Excidio* holds a unique place within early Christian history-writing,⁴ especially that of the fourth century, in dealing with military history and in focusing on classical historiographical preoccupations: political, diplomatic, and martial descriptions, topographical and architectural *ekphrasis*, character speeches, discussions of causality, and so on. Inasmuch as the passages and discourses discussed in this book are representative of Ps-Hegesippus as an author and *De Excidio* as a work, this study traces the contours of a history whose landscape is unusual within the Christian literature of its time. As much like Ammianus Marcellinus as it is any of its fourth-century Christian peers, *De Excidio* reveals a more classical side of early Christian history-writing. Far from the church histories and chronicles effectively inaugurated by Eusebius, Ps-Hegesippus blazes a path for a more Romanesque, less churchy historiography. While later authors like Orosius and Procopius join Ps-Hegesippus in this regard to a point, *De Excidio* should be for students of early Christian historiography a telling outlier whose idiosyncrasies point to a diversity within that literary industry not often accounted for in modern scholarship.

By the same token, *De Excidio* may help explode the changing but still often assumed divide between “Christian” and “Roman” culture, literature, and ideas in late antiquity. In her book on Jerome, Megan Williams discusses how fourth-century Christian reactions to late Roman elite education and literary culture “included both suspicion and criticism, and the reappropriation of literary culture in new contexts.”⁵ She concludes that Jerome betrays a “complex mixture” of these reactions. So too Ps-Hegesippus, though with perhaps less criticism and more easy adoption of Roman *mores*. Ps-Hegesippus was a Christian author, but his history is undeniably Roman. His use of biblical *exempla* betrays a hybrid outlook. Thus, as the present study has shown, Ps-Hegesippus, like Jerome, helps illustrate how “Christianity’s effectiveness in the Roman empire lay in its capacity to create its own intellectual and imaginative universe” and also how “its literary devices and techniques ... related to changing contemporary circumstances.”⁶

⁴ Bay 2021f.

⁵ Williams 2006, 18.

⁶ Cameron 1991, 6. Showing these two things is the self-proclaimed aim of Cameron’s lectures/book.

This book has shown how *De Excidio*'s literary exemplarity resembles in several ways non-Christian, Roman uses of *exempla*: intra-narrative characters debate battle tactics, the correct forms of patriotism, how to wage war, and meanings of victory and defeat in battle (Chapters 8 and 9). The historian muses over the ethnographic details of his proximate other and adopts the standard discourses of ethnic/racial essence and chronological national decline (Chapters 2–4). But the means for effecting these discussions are *biblical exempla*, the obvious cultural property of Judeo-Christian, not Greco-Roman, tradition. The major heroes of history in Ps-Hegesippus' mind are figures like King David and the prophet Elisha (Chapters 6 and 7), not personalities shared with the broader culture. Perhaps the theme of martyrdom (Chapter 5) most poignantly illustrates *De Excidio*'s marriage between classical and Christian values: Christian martyrdom discourse drew upon the Roman "noble death" tradition, and Ps-Hegesippus uses *exempla* of military leadership from the Bible – Saul and Jonathan, Jeconiah and Zedekiah – to frame his discussion of martyrdom at *De Excidio* 5.22. But he also draws upon the Maccabean mother-martyr of 2 Macc 7 and 4 Macc, an originally Jewish example of martyrdom that became a model for Christian practice.

All in all, what Ps-Hegesippus' use of biblical *exempla* shows is that the Christian practice of exemplarity could be more Roman than is usually allowed. Ps-Hegesippus rarely talks about Christians. He rarely references spiritual things or church doctrine or Christian ethics. He does not use the models of the Old Testament to prescribe or evaluate Christian behavior (but he does use them to illustrate by example how Christians should think, especially about history). He treats them as historical figures, useful for negotiating the history of the Jewish people. This makes *De Excidio*, if not an absolute novelty within Christian late antiquity, at least an informative and original iteration of that cultural milieu. As scholarship on ancient Christian exemplarity progresses – indeed, it has just barely begun – *De Excidio*'s use of biblical *exempla* should be kept in mind. Ps-Hegesippus bids us pay closer, more critical, and more creative attention to the use of heroic figures within the various manifestations, literary and otherwise, of Christian discourse in late antiquity. The late ancient Christian imaginary comprised a world of heroes, a cultural vision whose lenses were fundamentally colored by paradigmatic figures and exemplary personalities.

De Excidio itself must also be kept in mind, obviously, when considering anti-Jewish discourse within Christian late antiquity. I have argued elsewhere that Ps-Hegesippus made a critical and central contribution

to this industry within early Christian empire.⁷ At the same time, writing about Jews from several centuries past, *De Excidio* is more obvious than most of its Christian peer-texts in engaging what Jeremy Cohen called the “hermeneutical Jew”; that is, a Jewish referent fabricated out of the Christian theological imagination and not represented in current social reality.⁸ Yet, even while not speaking to or even about Jews of the fourth century in which he wrote, Ps-Hegesippus inscribed certain critical features of Jews and Jewishness – as imagined by Christians – onto the late antique historiographical consciousness. And again, he used biblical *exempla* to do so.

Ps-Hegesippus had a model for deploying biblical *exempla* within the creation of later Jewish history. His primary source, Flavius Josephus, made this move in his own *Jewish War*, himself following classical precedents as a way to bridge any conceptual divide extant between Jewish culture and the Roman world. But Ps-Hegesippus went far, far beyond his source. His practice of biblical exemplarity was his own. But perhaps he was following Josephus’ advice: “The industrious writer is not one who merely remodels the scheme and arrangement of another’s work, but one who uses fresh materials and makes the framework of the history his own” (*Jewish War* 1.15). Other than Josephus’ own writings, what other material would a writer like Ps-Hegesippus have for framing Jewish history? His Old Testament. Ps-Hegesippus restructured the framework of the *Jewish War*, as we saw in [Chapter 1](#). But he also made the history of the Roman–Jewish War his own (that is, he made it “Christian”) by calling into action a host of figures from the biblical past and placing them at strategic locations throughout the narrative. An industrious writer indeed.

At the end of the day, I hope that this book renders *De Excidio* interesting, compelling, new. I would have specialists in Classics, Jewish Studies, Biblical Studies, and early Christianity, scholars of biblical reception and interpretation, students of ancient exemplarity and historiography – in short, those interested in Greco-Roman or Judeo-Christian antiquity – know about *De Excidio*. It is a text that deserves to be read, deserves to be sewn into the fabric of late antiquity woven by the collective hivemind of modern scholarship. It is a text that shows how an educated historian,

⁷ Bay 2021c.

⁸ Cohen 1999, 2: “the Christian idea of Jewish identity crystallized around the theological purpose the Jew served in Christendom; Christians perceived the Jews to be who they were *supposed* to be, not who they actually *were*, and related to them accordingly.”

a Roman and a Christian, would have understood the effective end of Jewish history in late antiquity. And it shows that that understanding leaned, as so often in the late ancient Christian mind, upon the Bible. It was the heroes of Hebrew antiquity who, for Ps-Hegesippus, provided models and measures for understanding history. Like many before and after him, yet in his own unique way, this anonymous author sat down to write the later history of the Jews. With his Josephus in one hand, his Bible in the other, and a smattering of Classics on his desk beside him, he began to tell the story, a story of rise and fall, of virtue and vice, of victory and defeat – a story, in the end, of divinely ordained destiny, by which the Jews came to the brink of destruction, and were summarily pushed over the edge. *De Excidio* is a story of *supremum excidium*, ultimate destruction, the end of a Jewish Temple, of a Jewish Jerusalem. But, in the eyes of this Christian author, this was not the end. Not really. For him it was only the beginning, the beginning of a new story embodied in a figure he calls, among other things, “the hope of nations” (*De Excidio* Prol 3).

Appendix 1

Old Testament Exempla in De Excidio, A–Z

This is an appendix listing the biblical figures that appear in *De Excidio* from A to Z. Figures that are not mentioned by name appear in []. Figures from the apocrypha (e.g., the Books of the Maccabees) but not in the Hebrew Bible appear in < > and are not counted in [Table A.1](#). This list draws predominantly upon the apparatus of Ussani (CSEL 66.1), the “Index Nominum et Rerum” of CSEL 66.2: 433–94, and my own findings. The asterisk indicates entries where there is a lack of clarity.

Aaron (×10): Appears at 2.12.3 (×2), 2.13.1, and 2.13.8 within an extended discussion on legitimate vs. illegitimate priesthood (Aaron’s original, pristine, God-sanctioned priesthood versus later [Jewish] perversions of priesthood by Uzziah, Herod, etc.). Appears in the speeches of 3.16 (×1) and 3.17 (×2) in his role as mediator between Israel and God’s punitive plague (Num 16:48). Appears in the same role at 5.2.1. Appears as owner of staff (*uirga*) in 5.9.4 (cf. 5.2.1) that blossomed to reveal God’s sanction (Num 17:8). Appears as God’s legitimate priest against the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram at 5.16.1 (Num 16). Often appears alongside Moses (3.16–17, 5.2.1, 5.16.1) and usually in the context of the rebellions of Num 16–17 (3.16–17, 5.2.1, 5.9.4, 5.16.1).

Abel (×1): Appears by name at 5.53.1 and is alluded to at 5.41.2, both times as the victim of murder by his brother Cain (Gen 4).

Abiram (×2): Appears at 1.44.8 and 5.16.1 and is alluded to at 5.41.2, always alongside Dathan as co-conspirator against Moses and Aaron (Num 16).

Abishai (×1): Appears at 5.19.1 as friend (*comes*) of David (2 Sam 21:17).

- Abraham** (×11): Appears at 3.17.1 (×2) as a model for dying according to God's timing (Gen 25:8) and as representative of the Hebrew heritage (*hereditas*). Appears at 4.23.2 as ancient inhabitant of the environs of Hebron (Gen 13:8ff). Appears at 5.16.1 (×5) as victorious over Pharaoh when his wife Sara was abducted (Gen 12; cf. 20), and thus as model for pious behavior amid troubles, and as uncle of Lot (Gen 12:4ff). Appears at 5.41.2 as *auctor* of Jewish *disciplina* and *cultus*, for Titus an explanation for Jewish savagery. Appears at 5.53.1 as the idea of the ancient Hebrew contempt for death. Appears twice in the context of the binding of Isaac, i.e., the Akeidah (Gen 22), at 5.41.2 and 5.53.1. The term *Abramidae* at 5.53.1 identifies later Jews as descendants of Abraham.
- Absalom** (×1): Appears at 1.44.8 as rebel against his father David (2 Sam 13–18).
- Adam** (×2): Appears twice at 3.17.1 as an example of what happens when one disobeys God, as he had fled from God and been excluded from Paradise (Gen 3).
- Ahab** (×1): Appears at 5.32.1 as a *Iudaeus* who epitomizes historical Jewish *perfidia* and *parricidia* and as such was the cause of his own death (1 Kgs 21).
- <Alcimus>** (×2): Appears twice at 2.13.1 as a priest in the line, but not the house, of Aaron (1 Macc 7ff; 2 Macc 14:3).
- Amaziah** (×2): Appears at 5.16.1 as an example of failure in diplomacy and war (2 Kgs 14; 2 Chr 25).
- Artaxerxes** (×1): Appears at 2.1.1 as an arrogant Persian overlord (Ezra 4:7–8:1; Neh 2:1; 5:14; 13:6).
- Asa** (×1): Appears at 5.16.1 as an example of how faith in God leads to victory, but also as a negative example inasmuch as he did not persevere in faith thereafter (cf. 2 Chr 14; 1 Kgs 15).
- Bathsheba** (×1): Appears at 5.16.1 as *filia Sabbati* (“daughter of the Sabbath”) and the object of King David's marriage (*copulauiisset*) through the “prophetic mysteries” (cf. 2 Sam 11–12).
- Benjamin** (×1): Appears at 5.15.1 as evidence that willing submission to those who are more powerful (in his case, his brother Joseph) leads to good results (Gen 44:12ff).
- Cain** (×1): Appears by name at 5.53.1 and is alluded to at 5.41.2, both times as murderer of his brother Abel (Gen 4).
- Cyrus** (×4): Appears at 2.13.1, 5.15.1, and twice at 5.16.1 as the Persian king who returned the Jews to the land from Assyrian exile (2 Chr 36; Ezra; Isa 44:28; 45:1; Josephus *War* 5.389).

- Daniel** (×1): Appears at 5.3.1.2 as prophet (i.e., author of the Book of Daniel) who predicted the destruction of the Jews, Jerusalem, Judea (cf. the “four kingdoms” schema of Dan 7–8).
- Darius** (×3): Appears at 1.40.2 as son of Hydaspes: *Hydaspen materni generis apicem* (cf. Josephus *War* 1.477); 2.1.1; and 5.16.1 as Persian king who had ruled over the Jews (Ezra 4–6; Neh 12:22; Dan 5–6; 9; 11; Hag 1–2; Zech 1; 7).
- Dathan** (×2): Appears at 1.44.8 and 5.16.1 and is alluded to at 5.4.1.2, always alongside Abiram as co-conspirator against Moses and Aaron (Num 16).
- David** (×12): Appears as a figure associated with Jerusalem at 1.1.8 and 5.9.1. Appears as forgiving father of Absalom at 1.44.8. Appears as prophet, psalmist, and/or musician at 3.16.1, 5.2.1 (×2), 5.9.4. Appears as a mild king at 5.15.1 (×2) and as husband of Bathsheba a non-instigator of civil war at 5.16.1. Appears as warrior/prophet superior to Alexander the Great at 5.19.1. The term *Dauiticum* at 1.16.3 is a reference David as psalmist. Appears more often than any of the biblical figure in *De Excidio*. Cf. 2 Sam, 1 Kgs, and Psalms as discussed in [Chapter 7](#).
- <Eleazar>** (×1): Appears as youngest son of Mattathias at 1.1.4 (1 Macc 2:5).
- Eli** (×1): Appears at 5.16.1 as an example of negligence resulting in divine abandonment (1 Sam 2–4).
- Elijah** (×1): Appears as Elisha’s master at 4.17.1 (Josephus *War* 4.460; 1 Kgs 19:19; 2 Kgs 2).
- Elisha** (×4): Appears as prophet who healed the waters of Jericho at 4.17.1 (2 Kgs 2:18–25); as savior of Israel from the Arameans/Syrians at 5.2.1 (2 Kgs 7:6); as deliverer of Israel from several disasters in 5.16.1 (2 Kgs 6–7). Always appears as a prophet who delivers God’s people in an emergency.
- Esau** (×1): Appears at 5.16.1 as brother and would-be parricide of Jacob (Gen 27:41b).
- [Evil-Merodach]** (×1): Unnamed King of Babylon who exiled Jeconiah at 5.22.1 (2 Kgs 25:27).
- Gideon** (×2): Appears twice at 5.16.1 as an example of a military leader whose success is directly attributable to divine intervention (Judg 7).
- Hezekiah** (×3): Appears at 5.9.4 associated with the story concerning the steps on the front of the Jerusalem Temple across which a shadow went backward as a sign of the Lord toward him (2 Kgs 20:1–11; Isa 38:8). Appears at 5.16.1 as a model of the right response to disaster:

- When the Assyrian King Sennacherib, through his agent Rabshakeh, threatened Jerusalem, Hezekiah looked to God, who saved the city by killing 185,000 Assyrians by night (2 Kgs 19:35; Isa 37:36). Appears at 5.39.1 as builder of the walls in Jerusalem destroyed by John and Simon's warring (2 Chr 32:5; cf. 2 Kgs 20:20).
- Isaac** (×1): Appears at 5.16.1 as an example of settling disputes peacefully, without violence (Gen 26:19–25). Also implicitly present in the Akedah references of 5.41.2 and 5.53.1 (Gen 22).
- Isaiah** (×1): Appears as God's prophet at 5.16.1 telling his people not to flee to Egypt as a rejection of Assyrian rule (Isa 30–31).
- [Ishbosheth]** (×1): Unnamed son of Saul killed by the *Iudaei* per 5.32.1 (2 Sam 4:5–6).
- Jacob** (×2): Appears at 5.15.1 and 5.16.1 as patriarch, father of the twelve tribes, and brother of Esau (Gen 25–49).
- Jeconiah/Jehoiachin** (×3): Appears twice at 5.22.1 and once at 5.31.2 as King of Israel who gave himself up to deportation to save Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24:12; Jer 24:1; cf. Josephus *War* 6.104).
- Jeremiah** (×1): Appears at 5.16.1 as the prophet who told Zedekiah not to fear leaving Jerusalem (cf. Josephus *War* 5.391–92; Jer 27:12; 2 Chr 36:12).
- Jezabel** (×1): Appears at 5.32.1 as a Jewess (*Iudaea*) who arranged Naboth's death (1 Kgs 21).
- Job** (×1): Appears at 3.17.1 as a model of the right way to suffer and deal with death (Book of Job).
- <John>** (×1): Appears at 1.1.4 as son of Mattathias (1 Macc 2:2ff).
- Jonathan** (×4): Appears at 3.16.1 as the ideal of noble death on behalf of country (1 Sam 31). Appears at 3.17.1 in the same vein, yet as someone who, unlike his father Saul, did not commit suicide. Appears at 5.22.1, imagined as a post-mortem interlocutor of Mattathias' sons.
- [Joram/Jehoram]** (×2): Unnamed but referenced twice at 5.16.1 as the *rex Israhel* who neglected the worship of the Lord and caused a famine upon Israel (2 Kgs 7).
- Joseph** (×1): Appears at 5.15.1 in his capacity as a chariot-riding potentate in Egypt (Gen 41–50).
- Joshua** (×4): Appears at 4.17.1 as the original Hebrew conqueror of Jericho (Josephus *War* 4.459; cf. Josh 6). Always appears as *Iesu[s] Naue*, corresponding to "Son of Nun" (Exod 33:11ff).
- Josiah** (×2): Appears at 5.16.1 as an example of military defeat as the result of going to war against divine command (2 Chr 35:20–24).

- Appears at 5.53.1 in the same context, but as a pious king (2 Kgs 23:1–25; 2 Chr 34).
- Jozadak** (×1): Appears at 2.13.1 as the high priest returned to Judah by Cyrus (Ezra 3:2).
- Judah** (×4): Appears at Prol. 3 and 2.1.2 as the patriarch from whose loins the legitimate Jewish leader must come (Gen 49:10). Appears in a similar vein at 5.22.1, and at 5.15.1, where he is called *ille nobilis Iudaeorum prosapia, qui nomen populo dedit*.
- <Judah the Maccabee>** (×1): Appears at 1.1.2–3 as a Hasmonean figurehead/hero (1 Macc 2:66ff).
- <Lysias>** (×1): Mentioned at 2.13.1 as *dux* of Antiochus V Eupator (1 Macc 3–7; 2 Macc 10–14).
- <Mattathias>** (×2): Appears at 1.1.2 and 5.22.1 as *auctor Macchabaeorum* (1 Macc 1–2).
- [Melchizedek]** (×1): The mysterious figure of Gen 14:18 whose Hebrew name (מלכי-צדק) literally means “just king” is called *rex iustus* via transliteration at 5.9.1 (cf. Ps 110:4; Heb 5–7).
- Moses** (×11): Appears at 3.16.1 as founder of Jewish *doctrina*. Appears at 3.17.1 as an example of waiting for God’s timing in death (Deut 34). Appears at 5.2.1 as figurehead of the Israelite Exodus from Egypt and divinely attended leader (Exod 2–14). Appears also at 5.15.1 as the one who called Israel out of Egypt. Appears seven times in 5.16.1 as mentor of Joshua (Exod 24:13; 33:11; Num 11:28; Deut 1:38; 3:28; Josh 1:1ff), successful leader of Israel against the Egyptians and against Amalek (Exod 17), and sanctioned leader (with Aaron) against Dathan and Abiram (Num 16). Appears seven times alongside Joshua, four times alongside Aaron.
- Naboth** (×1): Appears at 5.32.1 as a *propheta* stoned (*lapis est*) by the *Iudaei* (1 Kgs 21:13).
- [Nebuchadnezzar]** (×3): Implied at 5.16.1, 5.31.2, and 5.46.1 as the Babylonian king (though called *barbarus Persa* at 5.31.2) who sacked Jerusalem but preserved Israel and under whom certain Hebrews/Jews lived (2 Kgs 24–25; 2 Chr 36; Dan 3).
- Neco*** (×3): Appears at 5.16.1 and twice at 5.53.1 as the Egyptian king who fought against Josiah (2 Chr 35:20–24). A different Egyptian king, who briefly captured Abraham’s wife Sara (Gen 12) and mentioned only as *Pharao* at 5.16.1, is identified as “Nechao, king of the Egyptians, also called Pharaoh” (βασιλεὺς ὁ τότε Νεχαὼς Αἰγυπτίων, ὁ δ’ αὐτὸς ἐκαλεῖτο καὶ Φαραώ/*Nechias, qui tum erat rex Aegyptiorum, idemque Pharao vocabatur*) at Josephus War 5.379.

Thus, Josephus and Ps-Hegesippus both name exactly one Neco each, but are referring to different Egyptian kings.

<Onias> (×1): Appears at 2.13.1 as a high priest killed by Lysias, replaced by Alcimus (2 Macc 4).

Rabshakeh* (×1): Mentioned at 5.16.1 as Sennacherib's general come out against Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18). It remains unclear whether this is a name or a title.

Rahab (×1): Remembered as the "good prostitute" (*bona meretrix*) at 5.16.1 (Josh 2; 6; Heb 11:31; Jam 2:25).

Samson (×1): Appears at 5.16.1 as an example of faithful victory (Judg 13–16; Heb 11:32).

Samuel (×1): Appears at 5.16.1 as an example of faithful victory (1 Sam 7:12; Heb 11:32).

Sarah (×4): Named four times at 5.16.1 as evidence of God's willingness to fight on behalf of his people (she was returned with *pudor* intact; Gen 12; 20; Josephus *War* 5.380).

Saul (×8): Appears twice at 3.16.1 as an example of death for country and twice at 3.17.1 as a counterexample who pursued suicide out of fear (1 Sam 31; 1 Chr 10). Appears at 5.15.1 as Israel's first elected king (1 Sam 8–10) and then at 5.16.1 as an example of a leader who was defeated (*uictus est*) for abandoning the *praecepta dei* (1 Sam 15:26). Appears at 5.22.1, imagined as a post-mortem interlocutor of Matthias. Appears at 5.32.1 as the father of a son slain by the *Iudaei* (Ishbosheth; 2 Sam 4:5–6). Only a toponymic in Josephus' *War* (5.51).

Sennacherib (×1): Appears as an Assyrian king opposed to Hezekiah in 5.16.1 (2 Kgs 18; Josephus *War* 5.388).

<Simon> (×4): Appears as son of Mattathias who succeeds John at 1.1.5, killed in 1.1.6 (appears again at 1.1.8). Appears as successor to priesthood in 2.13.1 (1 Macc 2:3ff).

Solomon (×6): Appears twice at 2.13.1 and twice at 5.9.1 as builder of the Jerusalem Temple (1 Kgs 6; 2 Chr 3; Acts 7:47; Josephus *War* 5.137, 143, 185; 6.269). Appears at 5.15.1 as the king whose reign ushered in the "two-kingdom" period of Israelite history (1 Kgs 12; 2 Chr 10). Cf. the *porticum Solomonis* at 5.38.2.

Uzziah (×1): Appears at 2.12.3 as an *optimus rex* whose legacy was nevertheless stained because he usurped the *munus sacerdotii*, i.e., the *officium religionis* (2 Kgs 15:4–7; 2 Chr 26:16–23).

Xerxes (×2): Appears twice at 2.9.1 as a formidable potentate (Ezra 4:6; Esth; Dan 9:1; Josephus *War* 2.86, 358).

Zechariah (×1): Appears at 5.2.1 as a prophet stoned before the Temple (2 Chr 24:20–22; Matt 23:37; Luke 11:51).

Zedekiah (×1): Appears at 5.16.1 as an example of defeat following the abandonment of the Lord (2 Kgs 24:17; Josephus *War* 5.391). Implied but unnamed in the same context at 5.22.1.

TABLE A.1 *Josephus' Jewish War vs. Pseudo-Hegesippus' De Excidio*

Biblical Figure	Times Named in <i>Jewish War</i>	Times Named in <i>De Excidio</i>
Aaron	0	10
Abel	0	1
Abiram	0	2
Abishai	0	1
Abraham	2	10
Absalom	0	1
Adam	0	2
Ahab	0	1
Amaziah	0	1
Artaxerxes	0	1
Asa	0	1
Bathsheba	0	1
Benjamin	0	1
Cain	0	1
Cyrus	2	4
Daniel	0	1
Darius	1	3
Dathan	0	1
David	4	12
Eli	0	1
Elijah	1	1
Elisha	1	4
Esau	0	1
Gideon	0	2
Hezekiah	0	3
Isaac	0	1
Isaiah	0	1
Jacob	0	2
Jeconiah	1	3
Jeremiah	2	1

TABLE A.1 (continued)

Biblical Figure	Times Named in <i>Jewish War</i>	Times Named in <i>De Excidio</i>
Jezabel	0	1
Job	0	1
Jonathan	0	4
Joseph	0	1
Joshua	1	4
Josiah	0	2
Jozadak	0	1
Judah	0	4
Moses	0	11
Naboth	0	1
Neco	1 *	3
Rabshakeh	0	1
Rahab	0	1
Samson	0	1
Samuel	0	1
Sarah	1	4
Saul	1	8
Sennacherib	1	1
Solomon	4	6
Uzziah	0	1
Xerxes	3	2
Zechariah	0	1
Zedekiah	1	1
Total Named Appearances of Biblical Figures	25	136

Appendix 2

Pseudo-Hegesippus' Sources

Table A.2 lists all known sources of *De Excidio*, definite and possible, from Josephus, the Bible, and early Christian classical literature. Josephan passages are listed in the order of their “appearance” within each chapter. Biblical sources are usually listed by canonical order. Classical sources and Christian parallels are listed alphabetically by author. This chart uses Ussani’s critical apparatus (CSEL 66.1), Ussani’s and Mraz’s *Index Nominum et Rerum* (CSEL 66.2), Brakman (1932), sundry books and articles, and my own findings.

TABLE A.2 *Pseudo-Hegesippus' sources* (AJ = Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae* (*Jewish Antiquities*);
BJ = Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum* (*Jewish War*)).

	De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
		Prol 1				
		Prol 2				
		Prol 3		Gen 49:10	Eusebius <i>HE</i> 1.6.1, 8	
	I.1.1	BJ 1.31–35	1 Macc 1:11– 12,20–21, 43, 46			Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 5.1
	I.1.2	BJ 1.36–37	1 Macc 2:14–24, 42–44, 31–41, 49ff		Rom 2:26	Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 9.4
	I.1.3	BJ 1.47	1 Macc 9:4ff			Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 7.7 Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 7.5; 101.8
	I.1.4	BJ 1.48,42–44, 47				
	I.1.5	BJ 1.54	1 Macc 13–15			Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 3.256
	I.1.6	BJ 1.54–56				
	I.1.7	BJ 1.57–60				
	I.1.8	BJ 1.61			1 Cor 6:20; 7:23	Ennius <i>Ann.</i> 456
	I.1.9	BJ 1.62–67				
	I.1.10	BJ 1.68–69, 71				Hist. Aug. 4.6.9
	I.2.1	BJ 1.70–71				
	I.3.1					Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.97
	I.4.1	BJ 1.72				
	I.5.1	BJ 1.73				
	I.6.1	BJ 1.74				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
I.6.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.75–76				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 104.2
I.6.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.77				
I.6.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.77–78				
I.7.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.78–80				
I.7.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.81				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 7.345
I.8.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.81–84				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 9.493 Ovid <i>Metam.</i> 4.728–29; 5.18–19
I.9.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.85				
I.9.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.86–87				Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 58.15 Tacitus <i>Ann.</i> 3.44
I.9.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.88–90				
I.9.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.90–91				
I.10.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.92–94				
I.10.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.94–95				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 93.3
I.10.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.96–97, 92				
I.11.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.97–98				
I.11.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.99–102				
I.12.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.103–6				
I.12.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.106–9				
I.12.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.110–12				
I.12.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.113–15				
I.13.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.115–16				
I.13.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.117–19				
I.13.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.120–22				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 13.1

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
I.14.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.123–27				
I.14.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.127–30				
I.15.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.131–32				
I.15.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.133–37				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 1.150 Tacitus <i>Hist.</i> 1.53
I.15.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.138–39 <i>AJ</i> 14.54				Pliny <i>Nat.</i> 12.115–18 Tacitus <i>Hist.</i> 4.20; 5.6
I.16.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.139–40				
I.16.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.141–42				
I.16.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.143–44 <i>AJ</i> 14.59		Psa 78:1		
I.16.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.145–47		Psa 80:7		
I.16.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.148–49				
I.16.6	<i>BJ</i> 1.148				
I.17.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.150				
I.17.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.152–54				
I.17.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.155, 157–58			Heb 9:2–7	
I.18.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.156–57, 159				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 2.95
I.19.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.160–61				
I.19.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.162–63				
I.19.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.167, 165				
I.19.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.169–70				
I.20.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.171–74				Horace <i>Carm.</i> 1.34.12
I.21.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.175–78				Tacitus <i>Hist.</i> 5.6

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
I.21.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.179				
I.21.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.180				
I.22.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.181				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 5.7
I.22.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.182–84				
I.22.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.185				
I.23.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.185–86				
I.23.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.187				
I.24.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.187–89				
I.24.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.190–92				
I.24.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.193–94; <i>AJ</i> 14.137				
I.25.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.195–96				
I.25.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.197–98			Rom 2:15	
I.25.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.199–200				
I.25.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.201–4				Cicero <i>Amic.</i> 101 Cicero <i>Off.</i> 2.47 Tacitus <i>Ann.</i> 1.3 Ennius <i>Ann.</i> 254 Tacitus <i>Ann.</i> 3.29
I.26.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.204–7				
I.26.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.208–9				
I.26.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.210–11 (205)				
I.26.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.212, 214–15				
I.27.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.215–16, 218, 225–26				Corn. Nepos <i>Vir.</i> 22.2.1 Suetonius <i>Cal.</i> 5
I.28.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.226				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
I.28.2	BJ 1.227–28, 233				
I.28.3	BJ 1.233–35				
I.28.4	BJ 1.236–37				
I.28.5	BJ 1.238–41				
I.28.6	BJ 1.242				
I.28.7	BJ 1.243–44				
I.28.8	BJ 1.245–46				
I.28.9	BJ 1.246–47				
I.29.1	BJ 1.248–50				
I.29.2	BJ 1.254–55				
I.29.3	BJ 1.255–57				
I.29.4	BJ 1.259–60				
I.29.5	BJ 1.261				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 1.84
I.29.6	BJ 1.262–67				
I.29.7	BJ 1.268–71				
I.29.8	BJ 1.271–72				Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 55.6
I.29.9	BJ 1.274–76				
I.29.10	BJ 1.277–79				
I.29.11	BJ 1.280–81				Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 2.511
I.30.1	BJ 1.282–85				
I.30.2	BJ 1.286–87				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 1.42
I.30.3	BJ 1.288–94				
I.30.4	BJ 1.294–96				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
I.30.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.297–99				
I.30.6	<i>BJ</i> 1.303				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 1.364
I.30.7	<i>BJ</i> 1.303–7				
I.30.8	<i>BJ</i> 1.306–7				
I.30.9	<i>BJ</i> 1.310–13		Gen 1:10		Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 4.404
I.30.10	<i>BJ</i> 1.315				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 1.112
I.30.11	<i>BJ</i> 1.323–24				
I.30.12	<i>BJ</i> 1.325–26				
I.30.13	<i>BJ</i> 1.328–29 (339)				
I.30.14	<i>BJ</i> 1.336–39				
I.30.15	<i>BJ</i> 1.340–42				
I.31.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.339, 343–45				
I.31.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.345, 349–53				
I.31.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.354–57				
I.32.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.358–60				
I.32.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.361–63				Lex Cincia (204 CE) Livy 34.2.2
I.32.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.364–65				
I.32.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.366–68				
I.32.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.369–72				
I.32.6	<i>BJ</i> 1.373–79		Gen 4:10	Matt 26:53	Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 1.112
I.32.7	<i>BJ</i> 1.380–85				
I.33.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.386–90				
I.34.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.391–92				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (*continued*)

	De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
342	I.34.2	BJ 1.393–97, 400				
	I.35.1	BJ 1.401–2				
	I.35.2	BJ 1.403, 415				
	I.35.3	BJ 1.404		Gen 1:10		Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 7.84; 8.242
	I.35.4	BJ 1.408–9				
	I.35.5	BJ 1.411–12				
	I.35.6	BJ 1.413–14				
	I.36.1	BJ 1.431–34		Prov 21:6		Horace <i>Carm.</i> 3.24.8 Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 11.7; 93.3
	I.36.2	BJ 1.435–37 AJ 15.52, 49				
	I.37.1	BJ 1.437 AJ 15.55				
	I.37.2	BJ 1.437–39 AJ 15.23–25				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 93.3
	I.37.3	BJ 1.439 AJ 15.26–34, 44–49				
	I.37.4	BJ 1.439–40 AJ 15.64, 67				
	I.37.5	BJ 1.441; 442 AJ 15.67, 68–70, 80–86				
	I.37.6	BJ 1.443				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
I.37.7	<i>BJ</i> 1.444 <i>AJ</i> 15.240–46			Acts 11:5	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 3.138
I.38.1	<i>AJ</i> 15.243, 299–300				
I.38.2	<i>AJ</i> 15.237–38				
I.38.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.445–47				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 95.3
I.38.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.448–51				
I.38.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.452–54				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 5.202
I.38.6	<i>BJ</i> 1.455–56				
I.38.7	<i>BJ</i> 1.457				
I.39.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.457–66				
I.40.1	<i>AJ</i> 16.135 <i>BJ</i> 1.467–72				
I.40.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.473–77			Ambrose <i>Abr.</i> 1.28 Ambrose <i>Ap. Dau.</i> 1.3.11	
I.40.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.478–79				
I.40.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.481–82				
I.40.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.483–84				
I.40.6	<i>BJ</i> 1.485–87				
I.40.7	<i>BJ</i> 1.488–90				Plautus <i>Asin.</i> 863 Plautus <i>Mercat.</i> 290
I.40.8	<i>BJ</i> 1.491–97				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (*continued*)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
I.40.9	<i>BJ</i> 1.498–501				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 5.202 Horace <i>Epod.</i> 17.53
I.40.10	<i>BJ</i> 1.502–3				
I.40.11	<i>BJ</i> 1.504–5				
I.40.12	<i>BJ</i> 1.506–7				
I.40.13	<i>BJ</i> 1.508–10				Horace <i>Carm.</i> 1.3.26
I.41.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.511–12				
I.41.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.513–15	1 Macc 12:6ff			
I.41.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.516–25				
I.41.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.526–29				
I.41.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.530				
I.41.6	<i>BJ</i> 1.532–33, 531				
I.41.7	<i>BJ</i> 1.534–37				
I.41.8	<i>BJ</i> 1.538–39				
I.41.9	<i>BJ</i> 1.539–43				
I.41.10	<i>BJ</i> 1.544–46				
I.41.11	<i>BJ</i> 1.548–49				
I.41.12	<i>BJ</i> 1.550				
I.42.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.551				
I.42.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.552–55				
I.42.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.556–58				
I.42.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.559–60				
I.42.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.561–63				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
I.42.6	<i>BJ</i> 1.563–65				
I.42.7	<i>BJ</i> 1.566				
I.42.8	<i>BJ</i> 1.567				
I.42.9	<i>BJ</i> 1.568, 572, 578–81				
I.43.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.581–84				
I.43.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.584–85				
I.43.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.585–89				
I.43.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.590–91				
I.43.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.592–94				
I.43.6	<i>BJ</i> 1.595–97				
I.43.7	<i>BJ</i> 1.598–600				
I.43.8	<i>BJ</i> 1.601				
I.44.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.602–3				
I.44.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.604, 606–7				
I.44.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.608, 590, 609–13				
I.44.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.614–17				Seneca <i>Phaed.</i> 705
I.44.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.618–19				
I.44.6	<i>BJ</i> 1.620–21				
I.44.7	<i>BJ</i> 1.622–28				
I.44.8	<i>BJ</i> 1.629–31, 575–77, 632–36		Gen 4:10 Num 16:30, 32 2 Sam 18:9 Psa 115:2	Rom 3:4	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 4.438ff

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (*continued*)

	De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
346	I.45.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.637–38				
	I.45.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.639–40				
	I.45.3	<i>BJ</i> 1.641–43				
	I.45.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.644–46				Lex Cincia (204 CE)
	I.45.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.647				
	I.45.6	<i>BJ</i> 1.648–50				
	I.45.7	<i>BJ</i> 1.651–53				
	I.45.8	<i>BJ</i> 1.654–55				
	I.45.9	<i>BJ</i> 1.656–58				
	I.45.10	<i>BJ</i> 1.659–60, 658				
	I.45.11	<i>BJ</i> 1.661–64				
	I.45.12	<i>BJ</i> 1.665–66				
		<i>AJ</i> 17.193				
	I.46.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.666–69				
	I.46.2	<i>BJ</i> 1.670–73				
	2.1.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.4–5, 84–89				Tacitus <i>Ann.</i> 1.9–10
	2.1.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.80–81, 26– 28, 2, 31–32, 30, 90–91		Gen 49:10	Eusebius <i>HE</i> 1.6	Caesar <i>Bell. Gall.</i> 7.1.5 Cicero <i>Brut.</i> 58.212 Pliny <i>Pan.</i> 8.3 Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 42.1 Tacitus <i>Ann.</i> 15.50 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 11.335
	2.1.3	<i>BJ</i> 2.92,34–36				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
2.1.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.93–94, 98–99				
2.2.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.101–3				
2.2.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.105–10				
2.2.3	<i>BJ</i> 2.111				
2.2.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.114–16				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 4.28
2.3.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.112–13				
2.3.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.167–68				
2.3.3	<i>BJ</i> 2.169–70, 176–77				
2.3.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.178–80 <i>AJ</i> 18.168				
2.4.1	<i>AJ</i> 18.65–80			Luke 1:68	Cicero <i>Off.</i> 3.112 Curtius Rufus 5.44.1; 5.12.10; 6.11.12 Livy 2.4.5 Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 20.1
2.5.1	<i>AJ</i> 18.85–87				
2.5.2	<i>AJ</i> 18.63–64, 116 <i>BJ</i> 2.182–83			Mark 12:13–17	
2.5.3			Deut 25:5	Matt 14:3 Mark 6:17–18	
2.5.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.182–83				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (*continued*)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
2.5.5	<i>BJ</i> 2.184–85, 218–19				Justin <i>Epit.</i> 32.4.8 Ovid <i>Trist.</i> 5.4.31 Suetonius <i>Caes.</i> 44
2.5.6	<i>BJ</i> 2.204–14, 223				
2.6.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.248–51				
2.6.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.252–53				
2.6.3	<i>BJ</i> 2.254–57				Pliny <i>Ep.</i> 2.17.22
2.6.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.258–59				
2.7.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.261–63				
2.7.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.264–65				
2.8.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.266–70				
2.8.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.271–76				Tacitus <i>Ann.</i> 1.10
2.8.3	<i>BJ</i> 2.277–79				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 1.77.7 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 5.320
2.8.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.312–14, 333				
2.8.5	<i>BJ</i> 2.335, 338–44				
2.9.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.345–401, 382				Cicero <i>Fin.</i> 2.112 Horace <i>Carm.</i> 1.37.13 Horace <i>Epod.</i> 9.29

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
					Isocrates <i>Pan.</i> 89 Lucretius 3.1029 Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 79 Tacitus <i>Germ.</i> 4 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 6.798; 8.727; 10.12 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 2.511; 2.137
2.9.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.402, 344, 402–4			Mark 12:17	
2.9.3	<i>BJ</i> 2.405–7				
2.10.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.408–9				
2.10.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.411–16				
2.10.3	<i>BJ</i> 2.417–21				
2.10.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.422–24				
2.10.5	<i>BJ</i> 2.425–28, 430				
2.10.6	<i>BJ</i> 2.433–34, 442–49				
2.10.7	<i>BJ</i> 2.450–54				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 32.1
2.11.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.457–65				Tacitus <i>Ann.</i> 12.5
2.11.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.479–80				
2.11.3	<i>BJ</i> (2.487) 2.490–93				
2.11.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.494–98				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (*continued*)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
2.12.1	<i>AJ</i> 18.63–64			Mark 15:1ff, 13:1–2; 16:14 Rom 2:11 Col 3:25 <i>Apost. Const.</i> 7 Eusebius <i>HE</i> 1.11.98 Eusebius <i>DE</i> 3.5.106 Eusebius <i>Theoph.</i> 5.44	
2.12.2	<i>AJ</i> 18.117; 18.109–15, 124, 116			Matt 14:4 Mark 6:17, 18, 20 Eusebius <i>HE</i> 1.11	
2.12.3	<i>AJ</i> 20.224–26; 9.216, 222–27		2 Chr 26:16–21		
2.13.1	<i>AJ</i> 20.230–42 <i>BJ</i> 1.92–95				
2.13.2	<i>AJ</i> 20.242				
2.13.3	<i>AJ</i> 20.243 <i>BJ</i> 1.121				
2.13.4	<i>BJ</i> 1.14–15				
2.13.5	<i>BJ</i> 1.15–17 <i>AJ</i> 20.245				
2.13.6	<i>AJ</i> 20.245				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
2.13.7	<i>AJ</i> 20.247–49; 15.38				Tacitus <i>Hist.</i> 2.20
2.13.8	<i>AJ</i> 20.250–51				
2.13.9	<i>BJ</i> 2.277, 276				
2.14.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.499, 284, 503–4				
2.14.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.507–9				
2.14.3	<i>BJ</i> 2.510–12				
2.14.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.513–14				
2.14.5	<i>BJ</i> 2.515–21				
2.15.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.521–22				
2.15.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.523–26				
2.15.3	<i>BJ</i> 2.527–31				
2.15.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.533, 531, 534–37				
2.15.5	<i>BJ</i> 2.538–40				
2.15.6	<i>BJ</i> 2.541–46				Curtius Rufus 6.11.9 Pliny <i>Ep.</i> 5.6.31 Tacitus <i>Hist.</i> 5.6 Cicero <i>Verr.</i> 5.145 Caesar <i>Bell. Gall.</i> 8.33; 3.9.2, 5 Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 14.4 Vell. Paterculus 2.2.3
2.15.7	<i>BJ</i> 2.546–50				
2.15.8	<i>BJ</i> 2.551–55				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
2.16.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.556–58				
2.16.2	<i>BJ</i> 2.559–60				
2.17.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.561, 466–68				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 93.3
2.18.1	<i>BJ</i> 2.469–76			Prudentius <i>Ham.</i> 208	Florus 5.9.1
					Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 3.317; 10.428
3.1.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.1–2				Sallust <i>Ep. Mith.</i> 17
					Tacitus <i>Agric.</i> 30
3.1.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.3–5				
3.1.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.6–7			Eusebius <i>HE</i> 2.25.5	
3.2.1				Luke 7:14–15; 21:12	Petronius 26
				Acts 8:10; 9:34	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 1.301; 2.93
				Col 2:8	
				1 Pet 2:21	
				Ambrose <i>Aux.</i> 13	
				Ambrose <i>Hex.</i> 4.8.33	
				Eusebius <i>HE</i> 2.25.1–5 (2.14–15)	
3.3.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.1, 7–8				
3.3.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.9; 2.562–65				
3.3.3	<i>BJ</i> 2.566–68				
3.3.4	<i>BJ</i> 2.569, 577–82				
3.3.5	<i>BJ</i> 2.583–84, 595–98, 605–7				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
3.3.6	<i>BJ</i> 2.608, 32, 635–37				
3.3.7	<i>BJ</i> 2.638, 641				
3.3.8	<i>BJ</i> 2.642–46				
3.4.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.9–12				
3.4.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.13–21				
3.4.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.22–28				Cicero <i>Nat. d.</i> 2.83
3.5.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.8				
3.5.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.29; 7.245 <i>AJ</i> 18.97				Am Marcellinus 23.5.3 Libanius <i>Or.</i> 11.70 Lucretius 6.890 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 6.798
3.5.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.29–35				
3.6.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.35–40				
3.6.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.41–43				
3.6.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.44–47				Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 2.150
3.6.4	<i>BJ</i> 3.48–50		Exod 13:4; 23:26		Apuleius <i>Flor.</i> 9 Horace <i>Epod.</i> 15.19; 2.45 Horace <i>Sat.</i> 1.1.110 Livy 23.10.7 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 11.441
3.6.5	<i>BJ</i> 3.51–58				
3.7.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.59–63				
3.8.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.64–69, 110				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
3.8.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.110–14) 3.115, 127, 132–34				
3.8.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.130–31, 135–40				
3.9.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.141–43				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 1.426
3.9.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.145, 148–49				
3.9.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.150–54				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 6.96; 10.398
3.9.4	<i>BJ</i> 3.155–57				Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 60.2
3.9.5	<i>BJ</i> 3.158–60			Luke 4:29	
3.10.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.161, 178–84, 186–87				
3.11.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.188, 213–16, 221				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.481
3.11.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.222–25				
3.11.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.229–33				Horace <i>Carm.</i> 3.1.34
3.11.4	<i>BJ</i> 3.234–35				
3.12.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.236–39				
3.12.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.243–46				
3.12.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.271–74				
3.13.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.289–305				Am Marcellinus 24.6.8 Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 2.70 Tacitus <i>Ann.</i> 4.62 Tacitus <i>Hist.</i> 5.13

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
3.14.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.307–15		Exod 23:17	John 4:20–24 Heb 10:1	
3.15.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.316–19, 324–30, 332				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 9.236
3.15.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.333–35				
3.15.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.336–39				
3.15.4	<i>BJ</i> 3.340, 349, 355				
3.16.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.356–60		Exod 32:32 Num 16:48 1 Sam 31 (31:4) 2 Sam 1:23; 24:17		Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.49
3.17.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.361–83		Gen 3:8,24; 18:6 Lev 6:2ff; Num 16:48 Deut 5; 32:49; 34:1 Josh 7:15 1 Sam 8:7–9; 15; 16; 31:2–4 Job 3:3,20,23; 9; 10:18–20; 22:16 Psa 33:8; 93:14; 141:8 Prov 18:8,6,9; 21:16	Matt 16:19; 22:13 John 10:15 Rom 7:24 Phil 1:21 1 Cor 10:3 2 Cor 4:7; 7:10 2 Tim 1:14 Ambrose <i>Cain</i> 2.10.36 Ambrose <i>Parad.</i> 14.70	Horace <i>Carm.</i> 3.24 Livy 37.36.9 Lucan <i>Bell. Civ.</i> 6.60 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 12.603
3.18.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.383–86				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
3.18.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.387–91				
3.18.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.392–98				Horace <i>Sat.</i> 1.1.7–8 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.64
3.19.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.409–13				
3.20.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.414–18				
3.20.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.419–27				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 3.54 Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 17.1
3.20.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.428–31				
3.21.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.432–37				Cicero <i>Leg. Man.</i> 25 Livy 5.49.6; 33.37.8 Justin <i>Epit.</i> 1.8.12
3.21.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.438–42				
3.22.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.443–52		Psa 35:4		
3.22.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.453–61				Caesar <i>Bell. Gall.</i> 7.15.6
3.23.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.462–70				
3.23.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.471				
3.24.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.472–84			Gal 5:7	Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 7.7; 52.30; Livy <i>Peri.</i> 8
3.25.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.485–91				
3.25.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.492–96				Sallust <i>Or. Phil.</i> (<i>Hist.</i> frag) 7 Sallust <i>Ep. Mith.</i> 20
3.25.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.497–501				
3.25.4	<i>BJ</i> 3.503–5				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
3.26.1	<i>BJ</i> 3.506–15				
3.26.2	<i>BJ</i> 3.516–21				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 3.138; 5.320 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 2.500
3.26.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.522–31				
3.26.4	<i>BJ</i> 3.532–41				Livy 30.13.7 Ovid <i>Trist.</i> 5.10.16 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 7.749
4.1.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.1, 10, 5–8				
4.1.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.9, 10, 2–4				
4.1.3	<i>BJ</i> 4.14–16				
4.1.4	<i>BJ</i> 4.14, 17–29				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.631 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 10.412
4.1.5	<i>BJ</i> 4.30–38				
4.2.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.39–48		Eccl 10:18	Matt 24:44	Horace <i>Sat.</i> 1.1.1–8 Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 58.3
4.3.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.49–51, 56, 62				
4.3.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.63–68				
4.3.3	<i>BJ</i> 4.69–83				
4.4.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.84–86				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 1.77.7 Terence <i>Heaut.</i> 143
4.4.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.87, 93–96				
4.4.3	<i>BJ</i> 4.97–104				
4.4.4	<i>BJ</i> 4.106–11				
4.4.5	<i>BJ</i> 4.112–20				
4.4.6	<i>BJ</i> 4.54–61				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
4.5.1		Wis 15:4		2 Cor 5:17 Heb 10:1 Ambrose <i>Exp. Ps.</i> 38:24f Ambrose <i>Off.</i> 1.48.238	Cicero <i>Brut.</i> 33.126
4.6.1	BJ 4.121, 128, 135–36, 138				Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 37.5
4.6.2	BJ 4.139–46				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.97
4.6.3	BJ 4.147–49				
4.6.4	BJ 4.150–54				
4.6.5	BJ 4.155–57				
4.6.6	BJ 4.158				
4.6.7	BJ 4.203, 200–1, 204–7				
4.6.8	BJ 4.208–9, 213, 214				
4.6.9	BJ 4.216–21				
4.6.10	BJ 4.224				Horace <i>Carm.</i> 2.19.28
4.6.11	BJ 4.233–35				
4.6.12	BJ 4.236–37				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
4.7.1	BJ 4.238–69		Isa 49:26; 56:12	Ambrose <i>Enar.P s.</i> 35.15 Prudentius <i>Perist.</i> 14.9	Cicero <i>In Pis.</i> 42 Cicero <i>Phil.</i> 2.65 Horace <i>Carm.</i> 4.14.18 Naevius fr. 54 Seneca <i>Agam.</i> 591 Tacitus <i>Germ.</i> 3 Terrence <i>Heaut.</i> 143 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 6.179
4.8.1	BJ 4.270–82, 238				
4.9.1	BJ 4.283–87				Cicero <i>Div.</i> 1.35 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 5.693ff
4.9.2	BJ 4.288, 295–99				
4.9.3	BJ 4.300–5				
4.9.4	BJ 4.305–13 (4.312)				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 12.603
4.9.5	BJ 4.314, 326–28, 334				
4.10.1	BJ 4.335–44				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 1.14; 2.22
4.10.2	BJ 4.356–60, 363, 379				
4.11.1	BJ 4.366–76				Cicero <i>Off.</i> 1.84 Cicero <i>Sen.</i> 10 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 1.422
4.12.1	BJ 4.377–80				
4.13.1	BJ 4.389–97				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
4.13.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.398–409				
4.14.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.413–19				
4.15.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.420–23				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.803
4.15.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.422, 423, 426–36				Cicero <i>Off.</i> 1.90 Tacitus <i>Ann.</i> 15.11 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 6.674
4.15.3	<i>BJ</i> 4.437–39, 419				
4.16.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.439–43, 445–48, 444, 11, 449–50				
4.16.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.451–58				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 79.6; 48.3 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 3.202
4.17.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.459–73		2 Kgs 2:19–22	Ambrose <i>Hex.</i> 5.21.69 <i>Itin. Burd.</i>	Pliny <i>Hist. Nat.</i> 12.115–18 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 4.109
4.18.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.476–85 (4.478)			Ambrose <i>Hex.</i> 5.14.45 <i>Itin. Bord.</i>	Pliny <i>Hist. Nat.</i> 5.72; 7.65 Tacitus <i>Hist.</i> 5.6–7 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 7.33
4.19.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.486–90				
4.20.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.491–92				Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 55.6 Suetonius <i>Nero</i> 48–49
4.21.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.497–502				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 93.3
4.22.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.503–8				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
4.22.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.509–11				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 1.150 Tacitus <i>Hist.</i> 1.53
4.22.3	<i>BJ</i> 4.514–15				
4.23.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.515–18, 521–28				
4.23.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.529–37				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 1.14; 2.22
4.23.3	<i>BJ</i> 4.538–44				
4.24.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.545–49				
4.25.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.550–55				
4.25.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.556–65		2 Kgs 9:30		Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 8.474
4.25.3	<i>BJ</i> 4.566–76				
4.26.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.588, 592–600				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 85.41
4.26.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.601–4				
4.26.3	<i>BJ</i> 4.605–7				
4.27.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.607–15				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 5.163
4.28.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.616–17, 588, 620				
4.28.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.626–28				
4.29.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.630–32				
4.29.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.633–38				Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 1.6 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 9.236
4.30.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.639–42		Psa 4:5		
4.30.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.643ff				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
4.31.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.645				
4.31.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.646–48				
4.31.3	<i>BJ</i> 4.649				
4.32.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.650–53				
4.33.1	<i>BJ</i> 4.654–55				
4.33.2	<i>BJ</i> 4.656–58				
4.33.3	<i>BJ</i> 4.659–63				
5.1.1					
5.1.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.2–7, 9				
5.1.3	<i>BJ</i> 5.11–18				Claudian <i>In Ruf.</i> 2.391 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 3.46 Seneca <i>Clem.</i> 1.25.5
5.1.4	<i>BJ</i> 5.22–24				
5.1.5	<i>BJ</i> 5.24–32				
5.2.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.19 (4.315ff)	4 Macc 17:2 (2 Macc 7)	Gen 49:18 Num 16:48 Deut 32:5 Josh 6 1 Sam 16:23 2 Kgs 6:19ff; 7:6 Psa 78:1–3 Lam 1:1 Jer 15:3; 16:4	Matt 21:13; 23:37,35 Luke 2:30; 23:18–19 John 2:19 Gal 5:6 Eph 2:14 Heb 9:4; 2:10 2 Pet 3:10	
5.2.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.20				

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
5.3.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.40, 43, 47–54				
5.3.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.55–58				
5.4.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.59–65		Prov 21:1		Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 58.7; 58.17
5.4.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.67–68				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 106.5
5.4.3	<i>BJ</i> 5.70–84				Justin <i>Epit.</i> 18.1.7
					Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 61.7
					Tacitus <i>Hist.</i> 2.44
5.4.4	<i>BJ</i> 5.85–97				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 101.8;
					Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 10.398; 11.370
5.5.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.98–102				
5.5.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.103–5				
5.6.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.106, 109–14				Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 3.369
5.6.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.115–20				
5.7.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.121–25				Plautus <i>Aul.</i> 803
					Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 9.4
					Terence <i>Andr.</i> 845
5.7.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.126–28				
5.8.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.129–30				
5.8.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.248–51, 255				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 12.804
5.9.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.438		1 Chr 22:6–8		
5.9.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.212–13				Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 6.3

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
5.9.3	(AJ 3.184) BJ 5.231			John 1:29 Col 1:20 Heb 9:6–8 Ambrose <i>Exp. Luc.</i> 1.22 Ambrose <i>Ep.</i> 44.18	
5.9.4	BJ 5.216, 195		2 Kgs 20:8–11 Psa 22:5; 140:2 Isa 38:5–8	Mark 4:21 Heb 9:3–4 Ambrose <i>Exp. Luc.</i> 7.98	
5.10.1	BJ 5.238–39, 258–59, 261–62, 267–68, 275				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 12.804
5.10.2	BJ 5.278–79, 284				
5.10.3	BJ 5.287–90				
5.11.1	BJ 5.291–95				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 53.7
5.11.2	BJ 5.296–302				
5.12.1	BJ 5.304–5				
5.12.2	BJ 5.306, 309–17				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.408; 10.348; 11.842
5.13.1	BJ 5.317–24				
5.13.2	BJ 5.325–30				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 5.438

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
5.14.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.331–41				Catullus 8.2
5.14.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.343, 342, 346–47				
5.14.3	<i>BJ</i> 5.347, 356, 354–55				
5.14.4	<i>BJ</i> 5.356–59				
5.14.5	<i>BJ</i> 5.360–62				
5.15.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.362–375, 459	1 Macc 8:12, 14, 18 2 Macc 11:34–38	Gen 41:43; 44; 46; 47:12 Exod 14:12 1 Sam 8; 9:2 2 Sam 5:5 1 Kgs 1; 14:8	Ambrose <i>Jos.</i> 11.62	Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 1.112; 2.24 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 7.285; 11.515 Vergil <i>Ecl.</i> 1.66
5.16.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.376–419	Sir 46:1 1 Esd 1:23, (25)ff	Gen 12:14–20 (20:1–18); 26:14ff; 14:9–16; 26:26; 27:41ff; 32:1–2; 32:24; 28:7; 8:8 (8:11) Exod 1:12; 10:22; 9:23; 14:16, 21–23; 15:4, 1; 17:11 Lev 15:25 (28) Num 16:26 Josh 6; 10:12f Judg 7:16, 20; 4:9; 7:5; 16:17; 8:11; 9:10 1 Sam 2:12–17; 2:13; 4:11; 6:2ff; 7:12; 15:11	John 3:36 2 Cor 10:4 Heb 11:31 Minucius Felix <i>Octav.</i> 33.3 Ambrose <i>Abr.</i> 1.2.7–9 Ambrose <i>Jac.</i> 2.4.1 Ambrose <i>Apol. Dau.</i> 3.14 Ambrose <i>Apol. Dau.</i> <i>Alt.</i> 10.51 Ambrose <i>Exp. Luc.</i> 3.38ff	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 3.28; 7.465; 9.461, 534; 10.891; 12.691 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 2.145

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
			2 Sam 12:30ff; 11:27; 15 2 Kgs 18:28ff; 19:14ff; 3:8ff; 6–7; 25:7 2 Chr 14:10; 16:7ff; 35:20ff; 25:6ff Ezra Psa 141:1; 113:3 Jer (45:38) 45:17ff; (48:41) 48:17; (49:42) 49:4ff Isa 30		
5.17.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.420–24				
5.18.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.424–28				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 3.140
					Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 1.159
5.18.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.428–38		Judg 7:5		Decl. Mai. 12.7 Pliny <i>Ep.</i> 3.19.6 Pliny <i>Hist. Nat.</i> 24.93 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 9.386
5.18.3	<i>BJ</i> 5.446–59				Curtius Rufus 9.4–5 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 6.547; 9.809
5.19.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.460–65		2 Sam 21:16–22		Livy 2.33.5 Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 43.4 Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 44.1
5.20.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.466–72				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 5.435; 10.488

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
5.20.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.473–84				Sallust <i>Or. Phil.</i> (<i>Hist.</i> frag) 3 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 9.74ff; 5.611 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 4.565
5.20.3	<i>BJ</i> 5.486–490, 484				
5.21.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.491–93, 496, 499				
5.21.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.502, 510–11				
5.21.3	<i>BJ</i> 5.512–18			2 Tim 3:5	Lucan <i>Bell. Civ.</i> 7.823–24 Petronius 124 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 3.590 Vergil <i>Ecl.</i> 3.102
5.21.4	<i>BJ</i> 5.519, 522–23, 525				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 1.93 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 1.293
5.22.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.527–31; 6.104	1 Macc 2:40–41 2 Macc 7	Exod 5:14 1 Kgs 21:19 2 Kgs 24:12; 25:12; 25:27ff Psa 113:3 Jer (45:38) 45:17–18		Cicero <i>Rep.</i> 1.1 Ovid <i>Metam.</i> 6.509ff Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 31.9 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.478, 663; 4.169ff; 6.819; 8.491; 9.255; 10.59
5.22.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.531				Horace <i>Carm.</i> 3.2.17ff Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 7.173
5.22.3	<i>BJ</i> 5.534–40				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
5.23.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.533, 541–45				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 4.684ff; 9.486–93; 5.520; 9.480; 7.501ff
5.24.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.546				Am Marcellinus 24.2.6 Horace <i>Carm.</i> 3.2.13 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 12.395
5.24.2	<i>BJ</i> 5.548–49				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 14.4
5.24.3	<i>BJ</i> 5.550–52				Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 11.3 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 3.57
5.24.4	<i>BJ</i> 5.553–62				Cicero <i>Mil.</i> 11 Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 12.1 Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 14.4
5.25.1	<i>BJ</i> 5.567–71				
5.25.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.2–8			Ambrose <i>Hex.</i> 5.21.69	Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 79.6
5.26.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.9–11				
5.26.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.16–31				Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 82.3
5.26.3	<i>BJ</i> 6.33, 32				
5.27.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.34–53 (1.560)	4 Ezra 7.32	2 Kgs 24:16	Rom 7:24 2 Tim 4:7 1 Pet 3:22 Ambrose <i>Cain</i> 2.9.36	Cicero <i>Rep.</i> 6.16 Cicero <i>Sen.</i> 75 Cicero <i>Tusc.</i> 1.101 Macrobius <i>Somn.</i> 1.9.10 Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 20.9 Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 3.24 Tacitus <i>Hist.</i> 4.35

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
					Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 5.16; 6.83ff; 8.474; 6.879ff; 11.370; 5.305; 2.332 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 4.236ff; 2.135 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 11.283ff; 12.902 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 9.503ff Cicero <i>Phil.</i> 2.41 Livy 37.36.9 Lucan <i>Bell. Civ.</i> 6.60; 7.727ff Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.339; 5.329, 335; 9.189, 236; 10.781, 796 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 2.306
5.28.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.54–67				
5.29.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.68–80				
5.30.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.81–92 (6.80)				
5.31.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.93–97				
5.31.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.98–110		(Dan 9:27; 12:11)	Matt 24:15	Cicero <i>Deiot.</i> 8 Plautus <i>Amph.</i> 226 Sallust Cat. 52.3; 59.5
5.32.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.111–12		2 Sam 4 1 Kgs 21	John 1:11	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 4.438–39
5.33.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.113–17				
5.33.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.118–20				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

	De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
	5.34.1	BJ 6.121–23				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 12.804; 2.717ff
	5.34.2	BJ 6.124–28				Ovid <i>Metam.</i> 6.349
	5.35.1	BJ 6.129–35, 146				
	5.35.2	BJ 6.136–47				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 10.781
						Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 3.369
	5.36.1	BJ 6.149–55				Ovid <i>Metam.</i> 15.368
						Tacitus <i>Germ.</i> 14
	5.36.2	BJ 6.157–63				Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 2.145
	5.37.1	BJ 6.164–68				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 11.741ff
	5.37.2	BJ 6.169–76			Minucius Felix <i>Octav.</i> 27.8	Apuleius <i>Apol.</i> 93
						Apuleius <i>Metam.</i> 2.5; 6.7
						Livy 3.40.10
						Seneca <i>Ep.</i> 104.12
						Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 7.339
	5.38.1	BJ 6.164–65				
	5.38.2	BJ 6.177–85				
	5.39.1	BJ 6.186–92		2 Chr 29:3 (?)		
	5.39.2	BJ 6.193–98				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 7.493ff
						Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 1.376

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
5.40.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.199, 201–8			Ambrose <i>Hex.</i> 5.3.7 Ambrose <i>Ob. Val.</i> 58	Decl. Mai. 12.27 Seneca <i>Agam.</i> 26ff Seneca <i>Thy.</i> Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 3.67ff; 4.602; 5.202; 9.485ff
5.40.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.209–11	2 Macc 1:23			Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 6.604
5.41.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.212–14				Horace <i>Ars</i> 91 Martial 3.45 Ovid <i>Ex Pont.</i> 4.6.47 Ovid <i>Metam.</i> 15.462
5.41.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.215–19 (1.650; 4.484)	2 Macc 7:9, 11; 10:29–30	Gen 4; 19:24–25; 22:12 Exod 13:21; 14:22; 15:23– 25; 16; 17 Num 16:30 (16:32) Josh 10:13 Judg 11:30 2 Sam 3:28 1 Kgs 17 2 Kgs 2:11; 4; 19:35 Psa 13:3; 77:25 Ezek 37 Dan 3:23, 24	Matt 24:29 Luke 21:26 Heb 11:29 Ambrose <i>Ap. Dau.</i> 4.16 Ambrose <i>Ep.</i> 63.52 Ambrose <i>Off.</i> 3.12.78 Ambrose <i>Virg.</i> 2.5	Decl. Mai. 12.27–28 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 12.171
5.42.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.220–22, 229–32				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (*continued*)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
5.42.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.232				
5.42.3	<i>BJ</i> 6.239				
5.42.4	<i>BJ</i> 6.243–48				
5.42.5	<i>BJ</i> 6.249–52				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.54; 3.574 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 1.143
5.42.6	<i>BJ</i> 6.253–59				
5.43.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.266, 261, 265, 271, 280, 260			Mark 12:42ff (12:40)	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 4.670
5.43.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.285–88	2 Macc 14:15			Sallust <i>Cat.</i> 58.21 Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 3.24 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 1.82 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 1.488
5.44.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.289–99		Isa 13:6ff	Matt 27:51 Luke 21:25 Heb 8:5	
5.44.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.300–9				
5.44.3	<i>BJ</i> 6.310–15			Eusebius <i>HE</i> 3.8.11	
5.45.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.316, 318–22				
5.46.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.323–50	2 Macc 10:29ff Wis 14:3	Exod 14:22 2 Kgs 19:35; 3:22 Psa 113:3 Dan 3:19ff; 3:52ff	Matt 24:29 Luke 21:26	Cicero <i>Prov.</i> 14 Horace <i>Carm.</i> 4.41,44 Juvenal <i>Sat.</i> 10.148ff Propertius 4.4.58 Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 2.98.6 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 4.13; 1.105; 8.651; 9.386; 12.707

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
5.46.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.351–53, 356, 358				Curtius Rufus 7.1.29 Justin <i>Epit.</i> 1.9.18 Pliny <i>Ep.</i> 10.97 Sallust <i>Hist.</i> 3.101 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 11.395
5.47.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.358–62				
5.47.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.363, 366–69				
5.47.3	<i>BJ</i> 6.374, 378–84				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 6.503
5.48.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.387–91				
5.49.1	<i>BJ</i> 6.392, 394–400; 7.1				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> fr inc. 16 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 6.595; 8.675
5.49.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.433–34				
5.49.3	<i>BJ</i> 7.26, 20, 27–33, 36; 6.434				
5.49.4	<i>BJ</i> 6.435, 429, 420–21; 7.37–40				
5.50.1	<i>BJ</i> 7.244–50 <i>AJ</i> 18.97				Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 7.748; 12.603 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 1.47ff
5.51.1	<i>BJ</i> 7.251				
5.51.2	<i>BJ</i> 7.89				
5.51.3	<i>BJ</i> 7.43–49, 55–58, 111				

(continued)

TABLE A.2 (continued)

De Excidio	Josephus	Apocrypha	Old Testament	New Testament and Christian texts	Classics
5.52.1	<i>BJ</i> 7.252, 116–17, 119				
5.52.2	<i>BJ</i> 7.310–11, 315–19				Sallust <i>Hist.</i> frag. inc. 4
5.53.1	<i>BJ</i> 7.320–22, 341–59, 323–34, 360–69 (2.487– 98), 369–88, 335–36	1 Esd 1:23ff 4 Ezra 7:32	Gen 1:26; 22 2 Chr 35:20ff Lam 1:1 Jon 1:10	2 Cor 7:10; 5:6 2 Tim 4:7–8 Heb 9:6–7 Ambrose <i>Bon. mort.</i> 7.26; 10.45 Ambrose <i>Cain</i> 2.9.36–37ff Ambrose <i>Ep.</i> 37.35ff Ambrose <i>Exc.</i> 2.5 Ambrose <i>Exp. Luc.</i> 1.22; 5.9.22 Ambrose <i>Isa.</i> 8.64–65, 67	Cicero <i>Rep.</i> 6.14,16 Macrobius <i>Som.</i> 1.9.10; 1.10.6ff Sallust <i>Jug.</i> 14.18 Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 2.57,663; 3.711; 9.201ff; 11.687 Vergil <i>Ecl.</i> 1.70 Vergil <i>Georg.</i> 2.135; 3.11
5.53.2	<i>BJ</i> 7.389–404				

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